DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 417 193 TM 027 740

AUTHOR	Hone, Lisa Richards, Ed.
TITLE	GED Items. The Newsletter of the GED Testing Service, 1997.
INSTITUTION	American Council on Education, Washington, D.C. General Educational Development Testing Service.
ISSN	ISSN-0896-0518
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	62p.; Issues 2 and 3 were mis-numbered "Volume 13."
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
JOURNAL CIT	GED Items; v14 n1-6 1997
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Aspiration; *Adult Education; Adults; *Equivalency Tests; *High School Equivalency Programs; Profiles; Program Descriptions; Teaching Methods; *Test Use; *Testing Problems
IDENTIFIERS	*General Educational Development Tests; Monitoring; Test Security

ABSTRACT

This document consists of the six issues of the newsletter of the General Educational Development Testing (GED) Service published during 1997. The lead articles of the six issues are, respectively: (1) "Task Force Considers Improvements to Test Center Security Rules," by Cathy Allin discusses the implementation of a monitoring team and security program for the GED tests; (2) "Resources Now in Place To Aid Victims of 'GED for Sale' Fraudmongers," is a discussion of the steps the GED Service will take to help those who have been victimized by people promising an easy GED course with passing guaranteed; (3) "More Adults Complete GED Tests; Most Plan Further Education" observes that record numbers of adults in the United States and Canada completed the GED examinations in 1996; (4/5) "Summer Conference Focuses on Present Needs, Plans for Future Tests" discusses the GED Annual Conference; and (6) "Innovative Process Matches Innovative Spanish-Language Tests to U.S. English Standard" discusses the development of Spanish-Language versions of the GED Tests. A regular feature of this newsletter profiles people who successfully earned their equivalency diplomas. All issues contain "Teaching Tips" as part of an ongoing series for instructors. These tips focus on such topics as science, mathematics, and standards for instruction, and are designed to help instructors prepare their students for the GED examinations. Other news and notes related to high school equivalency programs are included. (SLD)

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GED *Items*

American Council on Education 1997

The Newsletter of the GED Testing Service

Issues included:

Volume 14, No. 1 - Jan/Feb 1997
Volume 14, No. 2 - Mar/Apr 1997 (misnumbered Vol. 13)
Volume 14, No. 3 - May/Jun 1997 (misnumbered Vol. 13)
Volume 14, No. 4/5 - Sep-Oct 1997
Volume 14, No. 6 - Nov/Dec 1997

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GED Items

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VOLUME 14 NUMBER 1 AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1997

Task Force Considers Improvements to Test Center Security Rules

by Cathy Allin

In mid-1996, the American Council on Education contracted with Leibman Associates, a Washington-based consulting firm, to study the business practices of the GED Testing Service (GEDTS). The review recommends that GEDTS develop and implement a well-integrated security program.

As a first step, on December 12 and 13, 1996, GEDTS hosted a task force of GED Administrators and Chief Examiners to review security issues in test administration, Official GED Testing Center administrative procedures, as well as materials and personnel management.

Representing the GED Administrators were: Dorothy Oliver (NH), chair; Delane Boyer (NC); Larry Goodwin (PA); Linda Headley Walker (NY); Emma Rhodes (AR); Frank Shea (MA); Patricia Ta'ani (VA); Elvin Long (MO); Darlene Veltri (Federal Bureau of Prisons) and Nancy Edmunds (CA).

GED Administrators Linda Headley Walker (New York), Elvin Long (Missouri), and Darlene Veltri (Federal Bureau of Prisons)were among those who drafted improvements to GEDTS security standards and operating procedures.

Dolly Whelan of Virginia and Mary Grace Wendel of Arizona represented the Chief Examiners. Fred Edwards (Director of Client Services), Joan Auchter (Interim Director and Director of Test Development) and Doug Becker (Director of Psychometric Services) as well as Rudy Mason (Shipping Liaison), Kati Niemi (Client Services Manager), and Cathy Allin (Client Services Coordinator) of GEDTS were also in attendance.

The task force members quickly and vigorously embraced their mission, examined GED policy, discussed what worked, what needed improvement and what needed to be completely re-thought.

Eight major issues were discussed during the day and a half, nine more issues were reluctantly tabled. The following paragraphs detail the task force's recommendations.

Monitoring Team

The task force recommended that GEDTS establish a monitoring team to evaluate the security measures in place throughout each state, province, and territory, looking at the department or ministry office responsible for the program as well as local centers. They proposed that

continued on page 9

Inside Items

From the Director 2

GED Graduate Story 3

News and Notes 11

For GED Examiners 5

Teaching Tips 6

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From the Director

Massachusetts Board of Ed Explores Plan for GED Testing of Seniors

by Joan E. Auchter

On November 21, 1996, Massachusetts Board of Education Chair John Silber recommended that the state "administer the GED test to all high school seniors in March or April 1997 to help identify the academic deficiencies in the public schools and to characterize the current status of student performance in Massachusetts."

The plan, approved in December, provided for the entire seven-hour, 35-minute exam to be administered to each of the state's 60,000 graduating high school seniors. Although Silber's plan was originally adopted by the Board with little discussion, news of the decision brought on an extended public controversy, during which Governor William F. Weld (R), rose in support of the plan.

The recommendation sparked a discussion that shifted between "no stakes" and "high stakes" uses of the GED Tests, including proposals that would have predicated student graduation upon passing scores and noted GED test scores on student transcripts. Under one plan, students who did not meet minimum score requirements would have had "failed GED" stamped on their diplomas.

Statewide, some critics argued that a test designed for high school dropouts would set too low a standard. Others said they feared that if passing the GED Tests became a requirement for graduation, teachers might alter their curriculum, and concentrate solely on the specific information needed to pass the tests. Students at high schools across the state threatened to boycott the tests and stage protests.

In response to criticism that the GED Tests measure only minimum levels of knowledge, we wrote to the editors of the Boston *Globe*, illustrating the inaccuracies, false assumptions, and lack of information about the GED Tests that characterized much of the public debate. This was our opportunity to directly address prevalent myths about the tests!

Students who did not meet minimum score requirements would have had "failed GED" stamped on their diplomas.

For example, many seemed unaware that the current minimum passing score for the GED Tests is set so that only about 66% of all the graduating high school students in the United States would pass the tests if they took them.

Like many U.S. states, Massachusetts is in the process of developing statewide examinations, the last of which will be administered to 10th grade students. Although these examinations are tied to the development of nationwide educational standards, student and school comparisons will be available on a statewide level only.

The GED Tests are the only examination accepted and used in every U.S. state and territory to certify an individual's eligibility for a high school equivalency diploma and thus offered a viable national benchmark for Massachusetts to use in the study.

Silber, formerly president and now chancellor of Boston University, stated that using student performance on the GED Tests as basis for awarding diplomas would end "social promotions" and serve as a wake-up call to schools where student performance was consistently poor. In addition, the *Globe* reported, schools where a large proportion of seniors failed the tests were to have been targeted for state takeover.

On January 15, 1997, the Board reversed its decision to administer the tests this spring. Frank Shea, the GED Administrator for Massachusetts, identified positive outcomes from the public debate: "Teachers, students, and the general public are better educated about the rigor of the GED Tests," he said,

continued on page 12

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Continuing Education Now a Way of Life for 70-year-old North Carolina Man

by Sharon K. Collins

Joseph K. Sammons came to Craven Community College (CCC) about two years ago to begin investigating the possibility of continuing his education.

In May 1996, he set aside some time from his busy schedule to enroll in the GED program. Rosia Joyner, in the learning lab at CCC, helped Sammons get into the program. What's so unusual about this? Mr. Sammons is 70 years old and attended his last year of school in 1941.

Joseph Sammons takes a 'time out' from working at his computer. Among his current projects is an autobiography.

Early in World War II, Sammons went to work for the railroads at the age of 16. The railway supervisor spoke to his parents and encouraged them to let him come work for the system. Sammons held a job with the railroads for 47 years. Starting as a telegrapher and ticket agent, he worked his way up through the ranks, working as a train dispatcher, chief dispatcher, train master, and ending his career as an assistant superintendent. He worked in North Carolina, Florida and Virginia and changed areas of residence as often as anyone in the military. He's lived in New Bern since 1988 and loves the community.

Continuing his education was a promise he made to himself and his family. Sammons has three children and six grandchildren. All three of his kids attended college: one son has a BS in nursing, another is a supervisor for the local power company. His daughter, a licensed real estate agent, attended LSU and the UNC school of business in Charlotte. Sammons is a Shriner, a Rotarian, a Notary Public, and has also passed the real estate licensing examination.

"If I am an inspiration or if I can offer encouragement to others, I will have done what I wanted to do and I will be happy," he said. Sammons has several goals. He will pursue his two-year degree at Craven Community College and continue to a four-year institution. From there, he will proceed towards his master's degree. He is also writing his autobiography. What drives him on? Sammons says he feels we can never learn enough. He reads everything that he can and he says, "There is so much we cannot learn in a lifetime, but we can make the effort." He adds that he's "just scratched the surface."

The community college offered Sammons many alternatives. "The college can give people what they are looking for," said Sammons. "Everyone is friendly and willing to help you. When I first started, Rosia and Don King, the evening counselor [and GED Examiner], made me feel welcome and gave me encouragement." He credits them with making his transition into college a smooth one.

Sharon K. Collins is the Director of Communications at Craven Community College in New Bern, NC.

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Annual Data Collecting...What's it to You?

How many adults took the GED Tests last year? How many of them passed? Are more adults using special editions of the GED Tests than in previous years?

by Debra Louallen-Cole

These and other important questions are answered each year in the annual report, *Who Took the GED? GED Statistical Report* (we often call it the Annual Statistical Report or ASR). Reporting data from all participating states, provinces, and territories, the ASR presents a clear picture of GED and jurisdiction participation. It shows, for example, that in 1995 more than half a million adults in the United States and Canada earned General Educational Development (GED) credentials, the largest number in the 54-year history of the program.

In addition, the 1995 total brings to more than 12 million the estimated number of people who have received GED credentials since 1949. More than 20 million adults have taken the tests since they were begun during World War II.

To publish an accurate statistical report, the GED Testing Service (GEDTS) must have complete jurisdictional data. GED Examiners and GED Administrators play a critical role in making sure the ASR is accurate and published on time. How can you help?

- Keep complete and accurate records of all GED testing at your center. See Sections 2.3-2, 4.4-1, and Appendix 6A of the 1993 *GED Examiner's Manual*.
- Report your testing statistics on time. January 15, 1997 was the deadline for Chief Examiners to submit statistical report forms to the GED Administrator in the following jurisdictions: Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia (except for the 19 centers participating in the pilot scoring project), Wisconsin, and Wyoming.
- Submit a statistical report when a center closes. If your GED Testing Center was closed before December 31, 1996 and is located in one of the above jurisdictions, you must also submit a report.

As always, contact your GED Administrator or the GED Testing Service if you have questions or concerns.

The GED Testing Service is currently exploring new and more effective ways to disseminate the GED Annual Statistical Report. Testing center staff will be hearing more about these innovations in the coming months.

With the 1999 ASR, we will report race, ethnicity, and gender data for the 1998 calendar year. Please work with your GED Administrator to begin preparing for this now. You can make a difference—report your numbers accurately and on time!

Debra Louallen-Cole is the Project Manager for the Policy Research team at the GED Testing Service.

Who Took the GED? GED 1995 Statistical Report (item no. 250795), is available for $20 plus $5 shipping and handling, from:

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The new report, *Who Took the GED? GED 1996 Statistical Report* is available in June, 1997.

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Science Objectives, Teaching and Testing: Supporting the Goal of Scientific Literacy

by Burton E. Voss

Current progress in K-12 science is being driven by solidification of science education goals. President Bush's 1989 ("by the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in science and mathematics") and President Clinton's version of ***Goals 2000*** were conceived to develop national standards and testing to determine if students were attaining the goals. These plans were followed by vigorous efforts of national groups that developed ***Science for All Americans*** and ***Benchmarks for Scientific Literacy*** (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1990 and 1993); ***The National Science Education Standards*** (National Research Council, 1996); ***Scope, Sequence and Coordination*** and the ***Handbook of Research on Science Teaching and Learning*** (National Science Teachers Association, 1989 and 1994). These are significant examples of the driving forces in Science Education that will propel American students into the 21st century.

The ***National Science Education Standards*** support the national goal of scientific literacy for all students. Increased scientific literacy will benefit our society: citizens will be able to use scientific principles and processes in making personal decisions and experience the richness and excitement of knowing about and understanding the natural world. Economic productivity will increase in a society that is becoming increasingly dependent on scientific and technological skills and people will be able to engage intelligently in public discourse and debate about matters of scientific and technological concern.

Scientifically literate students and adults can use their knowledge to understand the world around them and to guide their actions.

Goals and Objectives

The author has had considerable recent experience in incorporating goals and objectives of science education into a high school science proficiency test. The following objectives framework describes the activities in which scientifically literate persons engage: using scientific knowledge, constructing new scientific knowledge and reflecting on scientific knowledge. These activities encompass the need for science education objectives to improve student understanding of science, to develop inquiry skills, and to be able to justify claims about the uses and abuses of science and technology.

Teachers are encouraged to make their teaching, their classroom activities, and testing procedures more congruent with the science education reform objectives now under way.

Using Scientific Knowledge

Scientifically literate students and adults can use their knowledge to understand the world around them and to guide their actions. Important types of activities that use scientific knowledge include **description** and **explanation** of real-world objects, systems, or events' **prediction** of future events or observations; and the **design** of systems or courses of action that enable people to adapt to and modify the world around them.

Samples of high school using objectives are:

- Explain the process of food storage and food use in organisms.
- Explain and predict general weather patterns and storms.
- Explain why seasons occur on earth.
- Explain how mass is conserved in physical and chemical changes.
- Describe general factors regulating population size in ecosystems.

Constructing New Scientific Knowledge

Scientifically literate students are learners as well as users of knowledge. With scientific literacy comes the ability to **ask questions** about the world that can be answered by using scientific knowledge and techniques. Scientifically literate can also **develop solutions** to problems that they encounter or questions they ask.

In developing solutions, scientifically literate students may use their own knowledge and reasoning

continued on page 8

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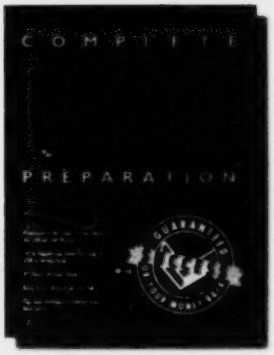

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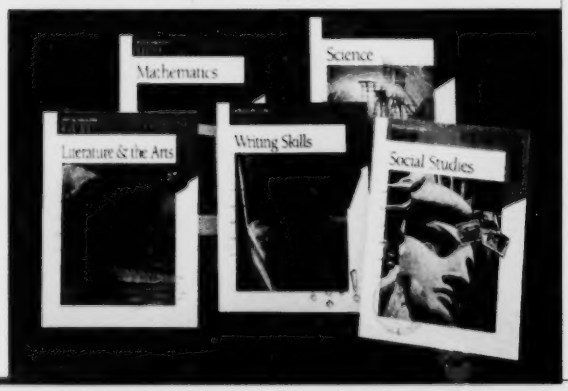

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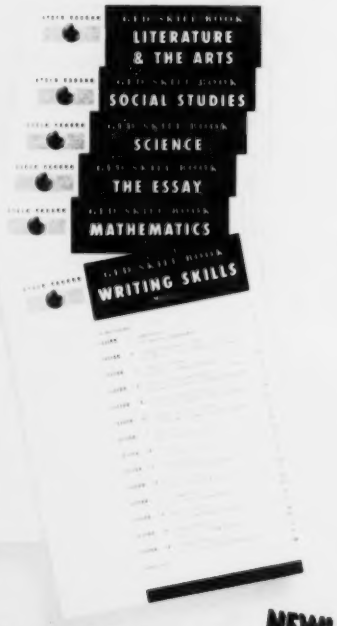

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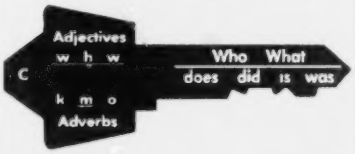

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Science Objectives, from page 6

abilities, seek out additional knowledge from other sources, and engage in empirical investigations of the real world. They can learn by **interpreting** text, graphs, tables, pictures, or other representations of scientific knowledge. Finally, scientifically literate students can remember key points and use sources of information to **reconstruct** previously learned knowledge, rather than try to remember every detail of what they study.

Scientifically literate students can describe the limitations of their own knowledge and of scientific knowledge in general.

Samples of high school constructing objectives are:

- Develop questions or problems for investigation that can be answered empirically.
- Suggest empirical tests of hypotheses.
- Design and conduct scientific investigations.
- Diagnose possible reasons for failures of mechanical or electronic systems.
- Recognize and explain the limitations of measuring devices.
- Gather and synthesize information from books and other sources of information.

Reflecting on Scientific Knowledge

Scientifically literate students can also "step back" and **analyze or reflect** on their own knowledge. One important type of analysis is the justification of personal knowledge or beliefs using either theoretically or empirically based arguments. Scientifically literate students can **show an appreciation** for scientific knowledge and the patterns that it reveals in the world; this often involves seeing connections among different areas of knowledge. They may be able to take an **historical or cultural perspective** on concepts and theories or to discuss institutional relationships among **science, technology, and society**. Finally, scientifically literate students can **describe the limitations** of their own knowledge and of scientific knowledge in general.

Samples of high school reflecting objectives are:

- Justify plans or explanations on a theoretical or empirical basis.
- Describe some general limitations of scientific knowledge.
- Show how common theories of science, mathematics, and technology apply in real-world contexts.
- Discuss the historical development of key scientific concepts and principles.
- Evaluate alternative long range plans for resource use and byproduct disposal in terms of environmental and economic impact.
- Recognize the contributions made in science by cultures and individuals of diverse background.

New Test Formats

Newer types of item formats have included the cluster problem, the text critique, and the investigation. A cluster problem represents a real-world context and asks a series of questions about it. In most cases the problem will include four multiple-choice and one constructed response (short answer) which will involve all three kinds of activities defined in the framework described in this article. A cluster would have to include: at least three

continued on page 10

Security Task Force, from page 1

the team include a former GED Administrator and that the monitoring activities take place in addition to the annual site visits, inservice training and other compliance measures developed by each jurisdiction to meet current GEDTS security requirements.

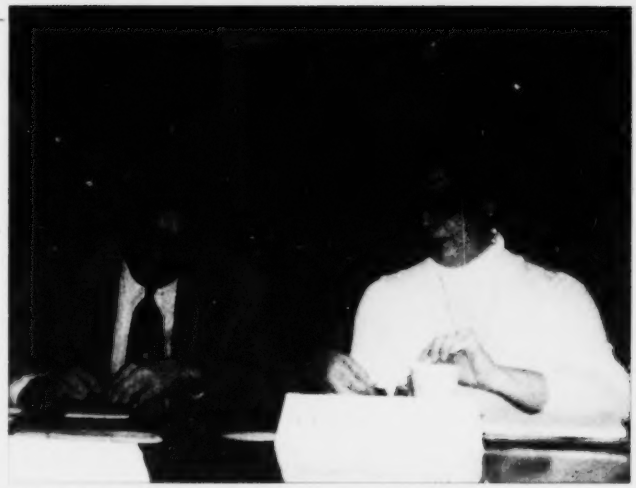
High Level Involvement

The task force noted that GED program issues merit greater attention at the upper administrative levels. Chief state school officers, college deans and presidents, superintendents, and wardens need to be "up to speed" on the major issues surrounding the GED Tests, especially the importance of test security. Panel members said that GEDTS must orient top-level educational professionals toward a more accurate understanding of GED program needs and benefits and urged GEDTS to obtain across-the-board, senior-level commitment to the program by requiring senior institutional officers to be signatories in the annual contracting process.

Transporting with Care

Members of the group agreed that the GED program must change the way that addendum sites are viewed, evaluated, selected,monitored, and administered.

The task force determined that permanent staff at the addendum site should be required to sign onto the test site security memorandum. The panel added that all addendum site personnel must be employed by the hosting Official GED Testing Center and be registered with GEDTS.



GED Administrators Delane Boyer (North Carolina) and Patricia Ta'ani (Virginia) reviewed GED security practices at a December meeting.

Improved Distribution Methods

Members of the task force said that GEDTS must notify each GED Testing Center when secure materials are shipped and include an estimated time of arrival on the notification. This procedure is one among several that will be implemented immediately. The panel also said that GEDTS should enclose a check-in report to the testing center, rather than a simple packing list, and add a description of the check-in process.

Training

GEDTS was directed by the task force to continue and expand the production of staff training materials, including videotapes, examinations for Chief and Alternate Examiners, and case studies to aid inservice training. States, provinces, and territories, they said, will support this activity by continuing to hold annual jurisdiction-wide meetings, inservice training at GED Testing Centers, and one-on-one and low-ratio training of all new GED Chief and Alternate Chief Examiners on an as-needed basis.

continued on page 10

Mastering the GED

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Science Objectives, from page 8

items that address **using** objectives, at least one item that addresses a **constructing** objective, and one that addresses a **reflecting** objective.

With scientific literacy comes the ability to ask questions about the world that can be answered by using scientific knowledge and techniques.

The investigation questions focus on experimental design and, thus, on constructing objectives. Students read a report of a scientific experiment and then are asked to respond to two constructed response questions about the report that covers constructing objectives only. The questions evaluate student ability to find flaws in the design of the experiment and give suggestions for correcting the flaw(s).

The text critique or text criticism item format asks students to read a passage from the popular press (newspaper or periodical) and then respond to two or three constructed response questions covering only reflecting outcomes.

Suggestions for Teaching

Teachers of students at all age levels need to be alerted to the kinds of teaching strategies that can assist persons in acquiring the knowledge and skills that are essential for them to do well on new forms of assessment.

The following teaching strategies will give the students the opportunity to do well.

Students should:

1. Discuss current scientific events the read in newspapers and magazines or view on television.
2. Design a science project, conduct it and write a report.
3. Take essay tests.
4. Take cluster-type format science tests (a problem, followed by four multiple-choice questions, plus one essay question).
5. Make diagrams to explain their thinking.
6. Write directions or procedures for other students to follow.
7. Use charts, tables, graphs, or diagrams to interpret data.
8. Write an explanation of a phenomena they observed (e.g., a tornado).
9. Discuss contributions to science from cultures and individuals from diverse backgrounds.
10. Make judgments and explain their reason(s) on how to solve a real-life science problem (e.g., pollution)
11. Make predictions based on data.
12. Formulate questions/problems to be investigated.
13. Critique the results of an experiment or investigation.
14. Apply their knowledge to everyday science experiences.
15. Explain data by applying scientific principles.
16. Outline their thinking by making concept maps.
17. Develop problem solving and inquiry skills.

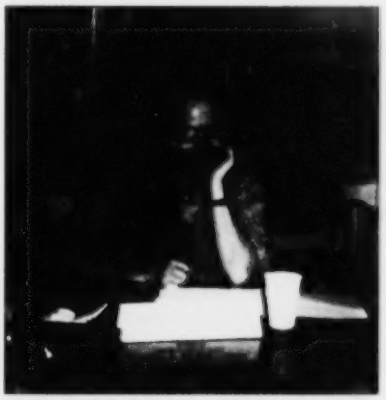
These, then, are suggestions for goals, objectives, teaching strategies, and testing procedures that can help students achieve the goals established by the national science education standards.

Burton E. Voss is Professor Emeritus at University of Michigan and chairs the National Science Teachers Association Assessment Subcommittee. A widely published authority on science curriculum and assessment, Dr. Voss is also an educational consultant with the State of Michigan.

Security Task Force, from page 9

Secure Storage Improvements

Among the topics reviewed in detail was test center storage of secure testing materials. The task force unanimously recommended that GEDTS get more specific about storage requirements for secure testing materials and require the file cabinet where secure materials are kept to have a sidebar lock to which only the Chief Examiner and Alternate Chief Examiner have keys (such locks cost about as much as "the Club™" does for your automobile). The sidebar locks come in several standard sizes and fit a wide variety of file cabinets. Currently GEDTS requires that tests be stored in "a sturdy, locked file cabinet or safe, accessible only to the Chief Examiner and Alternate Chief Examiner." (*GED Examiner's Manual*, Section 4.3-4.)



Nancy Edmunds last year instituted broad changes in Examiner training and test security in her home state of California

Personnel Qualifications

The Security Task Force examined the current qualifications required of all personnel charged with operating an Official GED Testing Center. They recommended that GEDTS require all newly appointed Chief Examiners, without exception, to hold at least a Bachelor's degree and that GEDTS discontinue the practice of waiving

continued on page 12

Music, Drama Augment Classroom Learning, Attitude

GED-prep and ABE students at Broward Correctional Institution in Pembroke Pines, FL are benefiting from the use of musical and dramatic elements in an educational setting. Their instructor, Jack Ruff, says, "We're presenting life skills to the students in many diverse ways."

Members of the ABE and GED programs at Broward Correctional Institution recently performed a song and a one-act play. Inmate Yuonne Smith re-wrote the words to the current popular song, "I Believe," to reflect how her new interest in education and learning has improved her outlook. The group hopes to perform more music soon.

For more information, • Jack Ruff, Education Department, Broward Correctional Institution, P.O. Box 84-8540, Pembroke Pines, FL 33084.

Roster of GED Administrators Boasts New Names

The staff of the GED Testing Service extends its thanks and best wishes to the following GED Administrators who retired or left the program during 1996. Many of them saw GED through two decades or more of tremendous growth. Hats off to Connie Munro, AK; Pat Taylor, AZ; Robert Cervantes, CA; Karen Torp, CO; John Lawrence, FL; Mary Ann Corley, MD; Burney Bouslough, NE; Donna Lane, OR; Donna Spalding, TN; Murray Meszaros, UT; Dean Gagnon, WI; Len Badcock and Lenore Perry, Newfoundland; Douglas Pelchat and D.H. "Mitch" Mitchell, Canada Forces.

New to the family of GED Administrators are: Jeff Cohen, AZ ☎ (602) 542-5802; Mary Willoughby, CO ☎ (303) 866-6743; Jacqueline Brown-Baxter, MD ☎ (410) 767-0538; Vicki Bauer, NE ☎ (402) 471-4806; Kathleen Cole, WI (608) 261-6335; Virg Kollar, Kwajalein ☎ (805)238-7994 ext. 1078; Alfred Capelle, Marshall Islands ☎ (692) 625-3394; Christiane Blanchette, Canada Forces ☎ (613) 996-2429; Helen Banfield, Newfoundland ☎ (709) 729-2999.

Upcoming Conferences

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Annual Meeting gets under way in Orlando, FL, March 11–15. • TESOL, 1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314.

National Conference on Family Literacy takes place in Louisville, KY, April 20–22, with preconference workshops April 17–18. ☎ NCFL (502) 584-1133.

COABE '97 hits Detroit, MI, May 28–31. ☎ Gloria Mills (810) 340-6841.

AAACE '97 meets this year in Cincinnati, OH, November 9–11. ☎ Judy Scherrer (513) 887-5021.

"Change in the world emanates from the inside out—not from the outside in; therefore the highest calling that one can have is to understand one's self, particularly in relationship to consensus reality."

– Todd Rundgren
musician/producer/computer software designer

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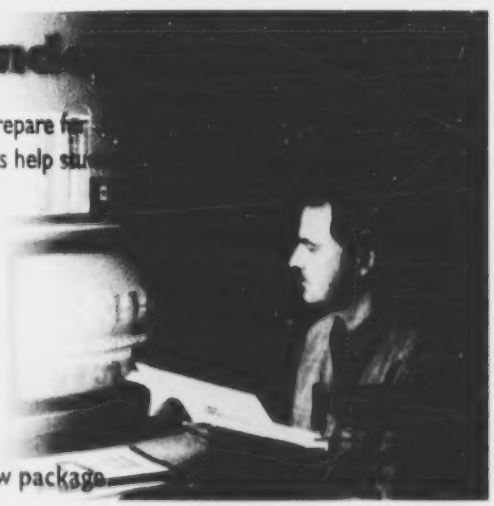

Massachusetts, from page 2

"and there is a stronger working relationship between the K–12 program and GEDTS."

David Merkowitz, Director of Public Affairs for the American Council on Education, lamented the Board's January decision as a lost opportunity "to evaluate the effectiveness of the different high school curricula offered across the state and to 'benchmark' the performance of Massachusetts high school seniors against a national standard."

As national standards and proposals for improved links between K–12 and postsecondary education rise to the forefront of our national discourse, we expect more jurisdictions to propose similar studies. Should you become aware of any such discussions in your jurisdiction, please contact me.

Joan Auchter is the Interim Director of the GED Testing Service and directs the Test Development unit.

Security Task Force, from page 10

that requirement for new Chief Examiners who have "equivalent experience." Under the task force's guidelines, the "equivalent experience" standard for Alternate Chief Examiners would be a minimum of four years' standardized testing experience and an Associate's degree.

Currently practicing GED Examiners would be exempted from the new, more stringent, requirements under a grandfather clause.

Next Step

Several of the recommendations described above will be implemented immediately, while others are slated for presentation to the entire body of GED Administrators at this year's annual meeting in San Antonio, TX. Additional recommendations may be considered at that time.

The meeting provided a dynamic and productive exchange of ideas and experiences. All the participants came away with a feeling of accomplishment, fellowship and renewed vigilance for the protection of the integrity and validity of the GED credential.

Larry Goodwin, the GED Administrator for Pennsylvania, takes a break from the serious discussion.

Mary Catherine "Cathy" Allin is the Coordinator for the Client Services team at the GED Testing Service.

GED Items

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VOLUME 13, NUMBER 2 AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION MARCH/APRIL 1997

Resources Now in Place to Aid Victims of "GED for Sale" Fraudmongers

Candace Cooke* called the GED Administrator for her state to find out why she hadn't received her diploma. "I took the test in January" she said, "and the school sent me a letter saying I passed." But her records were nowhere to be found.

As Cooke's tale unraveled, Larry Goodwin, GED Administrator for Pennsylvania, discovered the whole story. Cooke had paid a New York firm $150 to take a course and test for the GED at home. The results, she was led to believe, would get her a GED credential in her home state, Pennsylvania. "She wanted me to send her a diploma," Goodwin recounts. "Of course, I explained to her that we don't do business that way. Now she just wants her money back, and I don't blame her."

At the American Council on Education (ACE), which operates the GED Testing Service (GEDTS), Receptionist Alice Khalil noticed a troubling trend in the calls she answers each day. "People respond to ads and send in their money, finding out too late that the ads are bogus. Their next step is to call us, and there's not too awfully much we can do that that point."

Brenda West* saw an ad for GED diplomas in her local Mailbox Shopper and called GEDTS in Washington to find out whether the advertisement was for real. The ad promised a four- to six-week course and "EZ Payments."

> *Imitation is often called the sincerest form of flattery, but the adage doesn't hold true when people are led to believe that one can buy a GED diploma.*

Lately, calls such as this one seem to be on the increase, so Alice and interim Outreach Director Steve Sattler went to work on a plan of action and brought it to the GEDTS leadership for approval.

After gathering the details of Brenda West's story, Steve did a little investigation of his own, then followed up with the State Attorney General's Consumer Protection division. "I called the number listed in the ad," he reported. "I was told that I could receive a GED in the mail after paying $180 and completing eight courses."

As a result, the company now faces an investigation.

Steve says that the fraud is often blatant: "One victim told us that she asked the company representative what would happen if she didn't pass the exam, and the spokesman responded, 'Did you send in your final payment?' She told him she had. 'Then don't worry,' he replied, 'you'll pass.'"

The action plan includes a resource list of state and local consumer protection services. "Now when these fraud victims call us," says Alice, "we'll be able to refer them to a local agency that can possibly provide some satisfaction for them."

In addition, Steve penned a letter and fact sheet which is being distributed to newspaper advertising directors.

What can members of the GED community do to help make sure

continued on page

* The victims' names were changed to protect their privacy.

Inside *Items*

For GED Examiners 9

From the Director 2

GED Graduate Story 3

News and Notes 5

Teaching Tips 6

Plus...

Iowa's Amazing Rate 5

U.S. Consumer Contacts . . . 8

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GEDTS—Alive and Well with ACE

by Joan Chikos Auchter

While many of us in the immediate GED family have shared information about the future of the GED Testing Service (GEDTS) in meetings, by letters, and by phone, others have missed out on some of the conversation. Many of you may still have questions like these I hear:

"Will GEDTS remain at ACE?"

"Why did ACE review its relationship with GEDTS?"

"Will there be changes for those of us in the field?"

First, on February 23, 1997, ACE reaffirmed its commitment to GEDTS. Dr. Stanley O. Ikenberry, President of the American Council on Education (ACE), recommended that ACE retain GEDTS; ACE's Executive Committee and Board of Directors approved.

Writing to the GED Administrators, Dr. Ikenberry said, "You presented many cogent reasons for keeping GEDTS at ACE, among them that the value of the GED Test lies in the states' credential. Your strong support of ACE's continued ownership of GEDTS also convinced me that we, as partners, have the ability to work together to promote and develop our long-standing partnership in adult educational assessment and credentialing. I look forward to building on the newly generated momentum and enthusiasm for our continued partnership."

Second, it's important to the health of any organization to periodically review itself. With Bob Atwell retiring as ACE President, the ACE Board examined the mission alignment and financial viability of every ACE department. As a result, some long-established departments were disbanded.

Atwell retained Leibman Associates, Inc., a management consultant firm, to review GEDTS' mission alignment and financial operational systems. The Leibman report, delivered in September, 1996, confirmed that the missions of ACE and GEDTS are aligned and identified GEDTS' core competencies as test development and delivery.

> *"We, as partners, have the ability to work together to promote and develop our long-standing partnership in adult educational assessment and credentialing."*
>
> *—Stanley O. Ikenberry*
> *ACE President*

Dr. Ikenberry also affirmed the mission alignment. As he's fond of saying, "ACE is the American Council on *Education*, not the American Council on *Higher* Education." Because six of every 10 GED graduates plan to continue their education, the GED diploma is a bridge to those institutions.

The management review highlighted necessary actions for stabilizing GEDTS' financial footing, including cutting costs and raising additional revenue.

GEDTS is taking many steps to reduce costs, the most significant of which is ending direct scoring in June, 1997. Because we are structured to develop and deliver high quality tests, we could not compete successfully with other organizations that provide scoring and do it well. Other cost savings focus on how we print, package, store, and distribute materials, and on test construction and validation.

Reducing costs is not enough. GEDTS owes ACE more than six million dollars on a loan used to build the 1988 series tests. While ACE will recover most of its investment, the balance won't be repaid until 2000, the last year these tests are leased to GED Testing Centers. In examining its financial commitments, ACE has found that it can no longer finance such large-scale, long-term loans. Therefore, we must end our financial reliance on ACE. We've also learned that while our current pricing covers operational costs, it doesn't cover development costs or adequate test security.

The GED 2000 Series Tests are targeted for preview release in 2000, with January, 2001, as the date examinees will take the tests for the first time. There are research costs associated with the new tests, in addition to the cost of developing and producing new forms of the tests each year. Our partnership with the states, provinces, and territories requires flexibility and the capacity to rotate three unique forms yearly.

Test security is the Achilles' heel of any major testing organization. Leibman's report states, "although GED is taking steps to address this

continued on page 4

GED *Items* (ISSN 0896-0518) is published bimonthly by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education (ACE). GED *Items* is not copyrighted. Readers are invited to copy any articles not previously copyrighted. Credit should be given in accordance with accepted publishing standards.

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"Problem Child" GED Graduate Excels in College With Help for Learning Disabilities

I've been "different" all my life. Other kids called me "freak," "weirdo," and "dummy." At home, I was "the problem child." The school counselors were baffled by my performance on achievement tests. I did very well in everything but math, and excelled in reading and vocabulary. Why wasn't I "working up to my potential" in the classroom?

by L. Rusty Russell

Frustrated, my parents and teachers told me I was stupid, that I didn't try hard enough, or I didn't study enough, and that I was lazy. For a long time, I believed them, and resolved to try harder.

Dad was a physician and Mom was a college graduate, so shouldn't I be able to do the work? But trying harder didn't help. Soon my frustration began to express itself in fits of temper and fights. I spent a lot of time in the principal's and counselor's offices.

My parents tried bribery, punishment, counseling, but nothing changed. By the time I was in junior high, I hated school. In class, I was either bored or I didn't understand what was going on. When I did participate, I was dubbed disruptive because I asked too many questions.

Eventually, I stopped asking questions. Most of the time I read my own books I'd brought to class, or just daydreamed. I became invisible, a loner with few social graces and virtually no friends. I left school at 17 but I soon discovered I needed a GED to get a job. I took the tests in April, 1974, and, again, got high scores in everything (except math). But best of all, I was finally done with school.

I got by in the work world by hiding my "quirks"—limited math skills, easy distractibility, no sense of direction, inconsistent memory, short attention span, a tendency to blurt things out, trouble carrying out long verbal directions.

To avoid being "discovered," I took low-paying jobs with low expectations. Unfortunately, these sorts of jobs are notoriously boring, frustrating, or both. I went from job to job, seeking one that suited my talents and obscured my deficiencies.

As the years passed, it became harder to find a job I could do that paid a living wage. I needed a college education to compete. It was another year or so before I found the strength to confront once more my greatest source of pain and fear—school.

The university offered a study skills class and I took it, hoping it might solve one of my biggest academic problems. They didn't teach you how to study when I was in school. It was a good class but it didn't seem to help me.

For two and a half semesters, I struggled on, until I heard that I might get some help from the Dean of Students. So I made an appointment. When I explained my difficulties to the counselor, I was surprised to learn I could be tested for a learning disability, whatever that was, but I would have to wait almost a year for a testing date.

When the results were in, they told me I had a math learning disability. I'd always known something was "wrong;" I just didn't know it had a name. Now it was official, now people understood when I explained my problem. The real surprise, however, was the diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). I didn't have any idea what that meant at the time, and the psychologist didn't explain it very well.

I was in shock. The only part that penetrated for a while was the part about it being something over which I had no control. There was a reason why the problem child—the freak, the weirdo, the dummy—was the way she was. And it wasn't her fault!

My parents tried bribery, punishment, counseling, but nothing changed. By the time I was in junior high, I hated school.

I began reading everything I could find on ADHD and learning disabilities (LD). This monster had a name and I was going to learn all I could about it.

It turned out to be a painful process that brought up lots of difficult memories and two recurring questions common to those who are diagnosed late in life: How come no one saw what was wrong? And why didn't anyone help me? I alter-

continued on page 4

Learning Disabilities from page 3

nated between relief and despair much of the time.

Impulsivity (verbally and physically), easy distractibility, procrastination, difficulty getting organized, a low tolerance for frustration, restlessness, and a tendency to worry endlessly are some of the ways ADHD manifests itself in my life. Vital to my efforts at managing my ADHD are education and structure. Educating myself about the disorder and its management remains an ongoing process.

How come no one saw what was wrong? And why didn't anyone help me? I alternated between relief and despair much of the time.

Because I remember visual cues better than verbal ones, I try to integrate as much structure as possible into my everyday life using things I can see: lists, color-coding, post-it notes, appointment books, alarm watches, etc. These mechanisms help to provide the external controls I need to compensate for my unreliable internal controls. I've also tried medication in combination with other management strategies, both on a regular basis and as needed, and currently use it only as needed. So far it's worked pretty well.

One of the hardest things about this disorder for me is its invisibility. The fact that you can't see ADHD or learning disabilities, and the difficulty in explaining them is at once a blessing and a curse.

Even now, realizing that my disability is permanent, that I will never excel at certain things, can still have a depressing effect on me. But I've learned to cope with, or manage, most of the more annoying symptoms, to enjoy those that are useful, and to find a bit of humor in the rest of them.

Rusty Russell learned she had a math learning disability and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder two years ago, at age 40. She is now a full-time student majoring in professional writing at Purdue University, where she earns "mostly A's and B's."

Director, from page 2

issue, more must be done" and urges that we develop and implement a well-integrated security program. In December, we hosted a task force of GED Administrators and Chief Examiners to assess security issues in test administration, materials management, personnel, and inspection. While the final design and implementation of an improved security plan will take time, these initiatives require significant investment.

To underwrite improved security measures, to fund the GED 2000 series tests, and to sustain the financial viability of the program, we must modify our pricing structure—which brings us to the question about changes for those in the field.

To explore the options for generating the needed revenue, we met with almost all GED Administrators. After examining program requirements, the 73 Administrators endorsed a fee increase, providing us with both operational guidance and tremendous support. This increase amounts to $5.00 per examinee in addition to the current $3.00.

While we don't want to overcharge GED candidates, we must

continued on page 12

Surf's UP!

The Official GED Website is up and running!

For accurate, up-to-date information from the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education (ACE) about:

- Test Specifications
- Minimum Score Standards
- Program History
- Interpretation of Test Scores
- Answers to the Most Frequently-Asked Questions

...and more, "point" to **us!**

http://www.acenet.edu (ACE home)

http://www.acenet.edu/Programs/CALEC/GED/home.html (GED home)

News and Notes

Boost Literacy Support with a Birthday Card!

Random House publishers, the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), and local bookstores across the U.S. are celebrating the Cat in the Hat's 40th birthday all year long.

The stores will provide birthday cards for the mischievous Seuss character. For each card that a customer fills out and mails back to Random House, the company will provide one book to a family literacy site started through NCFL.

You can join in the celebration and support family literacy programs at the same time. See your local bookstore for details and help more families read together!

New Adult Education & Training Bill Intro'd in House

The Employment, Training, and Literacy Enhancement Act of 1997 (H.R. 1385) was introduced this spring by a bipartisan group of lawmakers.

The bill picks up where the stalled CAREERS bill left off last year by consolidating more than 50 employment, training, and literacy programs into three block grants: one for adult employment and training, one for the training of disadvantaged youth, and one for adult education and literacy. Grants to states would be disbursed based on local economic and workforce priorities.

As written, the bill requires that 85 percent of grant funds be spent in service delivery, establishes core performance indicators, and directs states to establish goals, benchmarks and measures.

H.R. 1385 has been approved by the Education and the Workforce Committee and is expected to be brought to the floor for consideration before the Memorial Day recess

Iowa's GED Pass Rate Exceeds Ninety Percent!

Thanks to an integrated effort by ABE/GED instructional programs and the GED testing delivery system in the state of Iowa, 92 percent of Iowa's 8,566 GED test takers earned scores high enough to qualify them for a credential during the 1996 calendar year. An impressive 85 percent passed the GED Tests on their first attempt, while another seven percent passed upon retesting.

In 1995, the total pass rate for Iowa was 89 percent. This increase, a four percent change, represents the single biggest annual increase in the history of Iowa's GED testing program.

According to John Hartwig, GED Administrator for Iowa, "Iowa has always ranked in the top ten states for GED candidates' pass rates. We believe that this high rate is due, to a large extent, to the fact that 94 percent of Iowa's GED candidates are direct referrals from instructional programs."

Official GED Testing Centers are established at each one of the state's 15 community colleges. Transportation addenda are used to reach examinees in outlying areas. State GED regulations require that "walk-in" examinees must pass a GED Practice Test before they may be scheduled for a testing session. Candidates referred from instructional programs are also screened to make sure they are ready to sit for the seven hour and 35 minute exam.

If an examinee does not pass all five subtests on the first attempt, he or she must wait six months before retesting, or an adult education program official must certify to the Department of Education that the examinee has received additional instruction in the areas where he or she did not earn qualifying scores.

Iowa's GED candidates are slightly younger, on average, than the program-wide average (24.7 compared with 25.3) and more than two-thirds (68.73 percent) have completed at least the tenth grade. More than three out of five (63 percent) candidates reported that they wanted to earn a GED diploma to qualify for further education and training.

The minimum passing score in effect for Iowa during the 1996 calendar year was a standard score of 35 on each test and an average of 45. This standard is met by approximately 70 percent of U.S. graduating high school seniors.

For more information, contact Dr. John Hartwig, (515) 281-3636.

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The GED Math Test: What Does it Take?

by Myrna Manly

For the past few years (since leaving my position as the GED Mathematics Test Editor), I have been consulting with agencies across the country that want to improve their math instruction. From Maine to Iowa, I have conducted workshops for teachers and supervisors. In my workshops, I present ways to teach math that focus on problem-solving skills rather than on the rote strategies of computation.

To ensure that all participants are aware that the GED Mathematics Test is a test of problem-solving skills, I begin each workshop by asking them to take one of the forms of the Official GED Practice Tests [published by Steck-Vaughn,(800) 531-5015]. In addition to finding the answers to the problems, I ask the participants to analyze the test and determine such things as how many of the problems actually require the traditional paper and pencil algorithms, how many involve fractions, and how much algebra and geometry are required.

When everyone has the real requirements of the test in mind, I make suggestions as to how they could teach these concepts without wasting a lot of the students' time. Some of my suggestions are:

- Teach estimation skills.
- Use calculators in your classes.
- Integrate algebra as "generalized arithmetic" from the beginning of instruction.
- Encourage the use of common sense to solve problems.

Certain questions and "challenges" to my "suggestions" always seem to arise during these workshops. The following is a sample of those questions and my answers.

Q. *How can you suggest that students use calculators in our classes when they are not allowed to use them on the actual GED Tests? Won't they become dependent on them and need that "crutch" during the test?*

A. I recommend that all students have a calculator at their desks at all times to use whenever they want. This allows everyone equal access to the real stuff of mathematics—problem solving. The students learn to perceive the calculator as a tool to use whenever it is appropriate, not as a tool that will do everything for them. They learn that it is really appropriate only for problems that require tedious computation.

Q. *Why doesn't the GED Testing Service allow the use of calculators on the test?*

A. There are issues of test security and equity that need to be addressed satisfactorily before calculator use can be implemented. The GED Testing Service is planning to include calculator use with the new series of tests that will be introduced beginning in January, 2001.

Q. *Many students come to our center for just a quick review of math, because they need to take the GED Tests within four to six weeks. What are the most important things to cover with these students?*

A. The most common weakness in math skills is the inability to apply computation skills to real-life situations. Rather than reviewing computation, I suggest that you start with word problems. Help students analyze problems so they know when to add, subtract, multiply, and divide, and how to work through a multi-step problem.

Also, most students need to spend time learning how to write the problem in mathematical terms. This is especially important to prepare for the "set-up" items (those that require only the method of solution and not the actual answer) on the GED Mathematics Test. Since there are usually many ways to find an answer, students need to be able to recognize the correct answer choice even if it differs from their own method. Practicing this can be very beneficial, since 25% of the problems on each test form will be set-up items.

Q. *Why is the test so tricky? The questions all seem to have a twist that confuses the student. Why don't they ask the questions straight out?*

A. The test is not tricky. In fact, the GED Testing Service makes every effort to insure that the problems are straightforward, with one correct answer. However, the questions are more than routine. Remember, this is a test of problem solving, not of rote procedures. Each item represents a problem that needs a solution, not merely a routine exercise to be performed. In this way, the test items measure the understanding of concepts, rather than the memorization of facts.

Myrna Manly is a mathematics instruction consultant and former Math Test Editor for the GED Tests. This article has been updated from a popular article which originally appeared in the September/October 1991 issue of GED Items.

Fraud, from page 1

that diploma fraud schemes can't take advantage of uniformed consumers?

Notify the authorities if ever you become aware that someone in your area is offering a "GED" through the mail. "The consumer protection agencies at least have the legal muscle and staff resources to make something happen," says Steve. "A copy to the GED Administrator would also make sense since the Administrator needs to know what's happening in his or her jurisdiction."

"I was told that I could receive a GED in the mail after paying $180 and completing eight courses."

Use the list on page 8 to refer fraud victims to authorities who can offer assistance. Other services may be available in your area; perhaps a local broadcast station has an investigative unit or operates a hotline for victims of deceptive trade practices. District attorneys, mayor's offices, county sheriffs, and local public service groups often provide simular services.

Help spread the facts where you can—the bulletin board in your intake area, the Rotary Club luncheon, shopping venues, town halls.

- There's only one GED—it's copyrighted.
- GED Tests are offered only at officially designated locations—not by correspondence.
- You have to take five tests and meet tough score requirements to earn a GED diploma.
- GED diplomas can only be issued by your state, province, or territory.
- The fee to take the GED Tests varies, but never exceeds $60.
- The GED Tests aren't easy—Each year to ensure their difficulty, they're administered to a representative sample of high school seniors, 34 percent of whom fail.

Imitation is often called the sincerest form of flattery, but the adage doesn't hold true when people are led to believe that one can buy a GED diploma. By educating the public and protecting the rights of people who have been mislead by deceptive practices, we're also defending the reputation of the real GED.

MOVING?

Now's the time to tell us!

Correct your current mailing label and forward it to:

Debra Louallen-Cole
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One Dupont Circle, NW Suite 250
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Adult Ed Specialist
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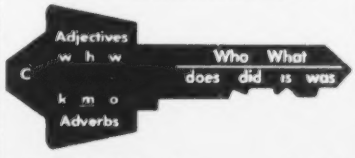

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Computer Program	$99.95
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Curriculum Manual, 1995

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for math videos

1-888-223-6284
for Grammar Key

http://www.acemath.com

State Attorneys General, Consumer Affairs Contacts Serve as Resource for GED Diploma Scam Victims

City, county and state consumer protection offices provide consumers with important services. Depending on the laws and regulations in your area, they may mediate complaints, conduct investigations, prosecute fraud, provide educational materials and serve as consumer advocates.

Local consumer protection offices are familiar with area businesses, ordinances and state laws and can be found in the government section of your telephone book. In some areas, television or radio stations operate a consumer hotline as a public service. If you can't find one in your area, or if you think the problem may be statewide, contact the state office, usually a division of the attorney general's or governor's office.

Try calling the office before sending a written complaint. Find out whether the office handles the type of problem you've discovered or if you must use a special form. Many offices distribute alerts on a variety of consumer issues and may have printed brochures available.

Following is a listing of state government consumer protection contacts.

Alabama
Dennis Wright, Chief Director, Consumer Affairs Division, Office of Attorney General, 11 S. Union St., Montgomery, AL 36130
(334)242-7334, Fax: (334)242-2433
Toll free in AL: (800)392-5658

Alaska
The Consumer Protection Section in the Office of the Attorney General has been closed. Contact your local Better Business Bureau, small claims court or private attorney.

American Samoa
Jennifer Joneson, Assistant Attorney General, Consumer Protection Bureau
P.O. Box 7, Pago Pago, AS 96799
011 (684)633-4163
Fax: 011 (684)633-1838

Arizona
Sydney K. Davis, Chief Counsel
Consumer Protection, Office of the Attorney General, 1275 W. Washington St., Room 259, Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602)542-3702, 542-5763

In Tucson: (602)628-6504, TDD: (602)542-5002, Fax: (602)542-4377
Toll free in AZ: (800)352-8431

Also contact the County or City Attorney for the area in which you reside.

Arkansas
Kay Dewitt, Director, Consumer Protection Division, Office of Attorney General, 200 Catlett Prien, 323 Center St., Little Rock, AR 72201
(501)682-2341, TDD: (501)682-2014
Voice TDD toll free in AR: (800)482-8982

California
Marjorie Berte, Director
California Department of Consumer Affairs, 400 R St., Suite 3000, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916)445-4465, TDD: (916)322-1700
Toll free in CA: (800)952-5200

Office of Attorney General, Public Inquiry Unit, P.O. Box 944255, Sacramento, CA 94244-2550
(916)322-3360, TDD: (916)324-5564
Toll free in CA: (800)952-5225

Also contact the Consumer Affairs, Consumer Protection, or District Attorney's office in the city or county in which you live.

Colorado
Consumer Protection Unit, Office of Attorney General
1525 Sherman St., 5th Floor
Denver, CO 80203-1760
(303)866-5189

Also contact the District Attorney for the county or city in which you live.

Connecticut
Mark A. Shuttrin, Commissioner, Department of Consumer Protection
165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106
(860)566-2534, Fax: (860)566-1531
Toll free in CT: (800)842-2649

Delaware
Mary McDonough, Director, Consumer Protection Unit, Department of Justice, 820 North French St., Wilmington, DE 19801
(302)577-3250, Fax: (302)577-6499

District of Columbia
Hampton Cross, Director, Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, 614 H St., N.W. Washington, DC 20001
(202)727-7120, Fax: (202)727-8073, 727-7842

Florida
James P. Kelly, Director, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Consumer Services, 407 S. Calhoun St., Mayo Building, 2nd Floor, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800
(904)488-2221, Fax: (904)487-4177
Toll free in FL: (800)435-7352

Cecile Dykas, Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Economic Crimes Division, Office of Attorney General, 110 S.E. 6th St., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
(954)712-4600, Fax: (954)712-4658

Also contact Consumer Affairs, Consumer Protection, or the District Attorney for the county or city in which you live.

Georgia
Barry W. Reid, Administrator
Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs, 2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S.E., Suite 356, Atlanta, GA 30334
(404)656-3790, Fax: (404)651-9018
Toll free in GA: (800)869-1123

continued on page 10

Attitude Builds Goodwill Between Local Recruiters and GED Testing Center

GED Testing Centers sometimes report strained relations with their local military recruiters. In contrast, the center at Washtenaw Intermediate School District in Ann Arbor, Michigan, has a long and productive relationship of cooperation and goodwill. How have they managed to make this happen?

"We begin with the absolute conviction that we are in the business of opening doors," observes Marjorie Mastie, the center's Chief Examiner. "The young people who come to us for GED testing have stumbled at some point in their formal education and are finding, as a result, that doors are closed to them everywhere. Most employers won't hire a dropout; colleges and training programs generally won't admit them; and military recruiters can't accept them. It's when this realization dawns that they turn to us."

Every possible effort is made to work within the candidate's deadline. If someone has a job offer that will only stay open until the start of the next work day, for example, the Examiner may send the essay by secure fax for scoring, receive the essay score back by fax, score all the other portions immediately and remain late to print a transcript.

With this extra effort, the examinee can leave the testing center that evening with an official score report in her hand to present the next morning to her new employer.

Similarly, if a recruiter says there is an opening if he can get a young person to the Military Entrance Processing Stations in Detroit by 9:00 a.m. Friday, the center will fit the person in for testing on Tuesday evening and Thursday morning.

As Pvt. Brian Miller and Sgt. 1st Class Mark Trim look on, Maj. Kurt Hill, battalion executive officer, presents Marjorie Mastie with a plaque of recognition from the Michigan Army National Guard. Photo courtesy of The Reporter Newspapers.

On Friday morning at 7:30 a.m., someone will arrive extra early to generate the transcript the young man or woman needs to take along.

Recently, Washtenaw's program received a special tribute. In a ceremony witnessed by more than one hundred Army National Guard members, some of them recent GED graduates, Mastie took delivery of an award engraved with these words: "Presented to Mrs. Marjorie M. Mastie, Washtenaw Intermediate School District, in appreciation of your support and dedication to the education of our future leaders and the Michigan Army National Guard."

"We've worked hard to cultivate goodwill and pleasant relations with local recruiters, admissions officers, and employers," Mastie noted. "All of us are trying to give people a second chance at success. We do our best when we remember that we're on the same team with the folks who provide the opportunities."

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Consumer Protection, from page 8

Hawaii
JoAnn M. Uchida, Executive Director
Office of Consumer Protection,
Department of Commerce and
Consumer Affairs, 235 S. Beretania
St., Room 801, P.O. Box 3767,
Honolulu, HI 96813-3767
(808)586-2636, Fax: (808)586-2640

Also contact the Office of Consumer Protection for the city nearest you.

Idaho
Brett De Lange, Deputy Attorney
General, Office of the Attorney
General, Consumer Protection Unit
650 W. State St., Boise, ID 83720
(208)334-2424, Fax: (208)334-2830
Toll free in ID: (800)432-3545

Illinois
Patricia Kelly, Chief, Consumer
Protection Division, Office of
Attorney General, 100 W. Randolph,
12th Floor, Chicago, IL 60601
(312)814-3000, TDD: (312)793-2852

Charles Gil Fergus, Bureau Chief,
Consumer Fraud Bureau, 100 W.
Randolph, 13th Floor, Chicago, IL
60601
(312)814-3580, TDD: (312)814-3374
Toll free in IL: (800)386-5438

Also contact the nearest Regional Office in Carbondale, Champaign, Chicago, Des Plaines, Edwardsville, or Springfield.

Indiana
Lisa Hayes, Chief Counsel and
Director, Consumer Protection
Division, Office of Attorney General
Indiana Government Center South,
5th Floor, 402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317)232-6330
Toll free in IN: (800)382-5516

Iowa
William Branch, Assistant Attorney
General, Consumer Protection
Division, Office of Attorney General
1300 E. Walnut St., 2nd Fl., Des
Moines, IA 50319
(515)281-5926, Fax: (515)281-6771

Kansas
C. Steven Rarrick, Deputy Attorney
General, Consumer Protection
Division, Office of Attorney General
301 W. 10th, Kansas Judicial Center
Topeka, KS 66612-1597
(913)296-3751, Fax: (913)291-3699
Toll free in KS: (800)432-2310

Offices also located in Johnson Co and Topeka.

Kentucky
Todd Leatherman, Director,
Consumer Protection Division, Office
of Attorney General, 1024 Capital
Center Drive, P.O. Box 2000,
Frankfort, KY 40601-2000
(502)573-2200

Robert L. Winlock, Administrator,
Consumer Protection Division, Office
of Attorney General, 107 S. Fourth St.
Louisville, KY 40202
(502)595-3262, Fax: (502)595-4627

Louisiana
Tamera R. Velasquez, Chief,
Consumer Protection Section, Office
of Attorney General, P.O. Box 94095,
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9095
(504)342-9638, Fax: (504)342-9637

There is also an office for Jefferson Parish.

Maine
Stephen Wessler, Chief, Consumer
and Antitrust Division, Office of
Attorney General, State House Station
No. 6, Augusta, ME 04333
(207)626-8849

Maryland
William Leibovici, Chief, Consumer
Protection Division, Office of
Attorney General, 200 St. Paul Place,
16th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202
(410)528-8662 (consumer hotline)
TDD: (410)576-6372, Fax: (410)576-
6566

Branch offices located in Salisbury and Hagerstown. Howard, Montgomery, and Prince Georges counties also operate Consumer Affairs divisions.

Massachusetts
George Weber, Chief, Consumer and
Antitrust Division, Department of
Attorney General, One Ashburton
Place, Boston, MA 02108
(617)727-2200, Fax: (617)727-5765

Also contact the District Attorney for the region or county in which you live. Several cities also operate Consumer Affairs offices.

Michigan
Frederick H. Hoffecker, Assistant in
Charge, Consumer Protection
Division, Office of Attorney General
P.O. Box 30213, Lansing, MI 48909
(517)373-1140, Fax: (517)335-1935

Also contact the Consumer Protection Unit for your area.

Minnesota
Curt Loewe, Director, Consumer
Services Division, Office of Attorney
General, 1400 NCL Tower, 445
Minnesota St., St. Paul, MN 55101
(612)296-3353

Agencies also located in Hennepin Co and Minneapolis.

Mississippi
Leyser Q. Morris, Special Assistant
Attorney General, Director, Office of
Consumer Protection, P.O. Box
22947, Jackson, MS 39225-2947
(601)359-4230, Fax: (601)359-4231
Toll free in MS: (800)281-4418

Missouri
Doug Ommen, Chief Counsel,
Consumer Protection Division, Office
of Attorney General, P.O. Box 899
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(573)751-3321
Toll free in MO: (800)392-8222

Montana
Annie Bartos, Chief Legal Counsel
Consumer Affairs Unit, Department
of Commerce, 1424 Ninth Avenue,
Box 200501, Helena, MT 59620
(406)444-4312, Fax: (406)444-2903

Nebraska
Paul N. Potadle, Assistant Attorney
General, Consumer Protection
Division, Department of Justice, 2115
State Capitol, P.O. Box 98920,
Lincoln, NE 68509
(402)471-2682, Fax: (402)471-3297

Nevada
Patricia Morse Jarman, Commissioner
of Consumer Affairs, Department of
Business and Industry, 1850 E. Sahara,
Suite 101, Las Vegas, NV 89158
(702)486-7355, Fax: (702)486-7371
TDD: (702)486-7901
Toll free in NV: (800)326-5202

New Hampshire
Chief, Consumer Protection and
Antitrust Bureau, Office of Attorney

General, 33 Capitol St., Concord, NH 03301
(603)271-3641, Fax: (603)271-2110

New Jersey
Mark S. Herr, Director, Division of Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 45027, Newark, NJ 07101
(201)504-6534 ,Fax: (201)648-3538

Also contact the Office of Consumer Affairs or Consumer Protection for the county, city, or township where you live.

New Mexico
Consumer Protection Division, Office of Attorney General, P.O. Drawer 1508, Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505)827-6060
Toll free in NM: (800)678-1508

New York
Susan Somers, Deputy Chief, Bureau of Consumer Frauds and Protection, Office of Attorney General, State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224
(518)474-5481, Fax: (518)474-3618
Statewide toll-free hotline (800)771-7755

Also contact the Regional Offices in the city or borough nearest you. Most counties and cities also operate consumer protection, consumer affairs, or citizen services offices.

North Carolina
Alan S. Hirsch, Special Deputy Attorney General, Consumer Protection Section, Office of Attorney General, Raney Building, P.O. Box 629, Raleigh, NC 27602
(919)733-7741, Fax: (919)715-0577

North Dakota
Darrell Grossman, Director, Consumer Protection Division, Office of Attorney General, 600 East Boulevard, Bismarck, ND 58505
(701)224-3404
Toll free in ND: (800)472-2600

Ohio
Helen MacMurray, Consumer Frauds and Crimes Section, Office of Attorney General, 30 E. Broad St., State Office Tower, 25th Floor Columbus, OH 43266-0410
(614)466-4986, TDD: (614)466-1393
Toll free in OH: (800)282-0515

Robert F. Tongren, Office of Consumers' Counsel, 77 S. High St., 15th Floor, Columbus, OH 43266
Voice/TDD: (614)466-9605
Toll free in OH: (800)282-9448

There are Ohio Prosecuting Attorney's offices in Franklin, Montgomery, Summit, and Portage counties. Also check listings for consumer affairs or neighborhood services.

Oklahoma
Jane Wheeler, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Attorney General, Consumer Protection Unit, 4545 N. Lincoln Blvd., Suite 260, Oklahoma City, OK 73105
(405)521-4274, Fax: (405)528-1867
Consumer Hotline: (405)521-2029

Oregon
Peter Sheperd, Attorney in Charge, Financial Fraud Section, Department of Justice, 1162 Court St. N.E., Salem, OR 97310
(503)378-4732, Fax: (503)373-7067

Pennsylvania
Joseph Goldberg, Director, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Office of Attorney General, Strawberry Square, 14th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17120
(717)787-9707
Toll free in PA: (800)441-2555

Also contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection for the city nearest you or the office for Consumer Affairs or Consumer Protection in the county where you live.

Puerto Rico
Jose Antonio Alicia Rivera, Secretary Department of Consumer Affairs (DACO), Minillas Station, P.O. Box 41059, Santurce, PR 00940-1059
(787)721-0940, (787)726-6570

Rhode Island
Christine S. Jabour, Esq., Consumer Protection Division, Department of Attorney General, 72 Pine St., Providence, RI 02903
(401)274-4400, Fax: (401)277-1331
TDD: (401)453-0410
Toll free in RI: (800)852-7776

South Carolina
Haviard Jones, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Office of Attorney General, P.O. Box 11549 Columbia, SC 29211
(803)734-3970, Fax: (803)734-3677

Philip S. Porter,Consumer Advocate, Department of Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 5757, Columbia, SC 29250
(803)734-9452, TDD: (803)734-9455
Toll free in SC: (800)922-1594

South Dakota
Division of Consumer Protection, Office of Attorney General, 500 E. Capitol, State Capitol Building, Pierre, SD 57501-5070
(605)773-4400, Fax: (605)773-4106
TDD: (605)773-6585
Toll free in SD: (800)300-1986

Tennessee
Mark Williams, Director, Division of Consumer Affairs, 500 James Robertson Parkway, 5th Floor, Nashville, TN 37243-0600
(615)741-4737
Toll free in TN: (800)342-8385

All complaints must be sent in writing to the above address for processing.

Texas
Tom Perkins, Assistant Attorney, General and Chief, Consumer Protection Division, Office of Attorney General, P.O. Box 12548 Austin, TX 78711
(512)463-2070

There are Regional Offices in Dallas, El Paso, Houston, Lubbock, McAllen, and San Antonio. Also contact the District Attorney for your county.

Utah
Francine A. Giani, Director, Division of Consumer Protection, Department of Commerce, 160 E. 300 South, Box 146704, Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6704
(801)530-6601, Fax: (801)530-6001
Toll free in UT: (800)721-7233

Vermont
John Hasen, Assistant Attorney General and Chief, Public Protection Division, Office of Attorney General 109 State St., Montpelier, VT 05609-1001
(802)828-3171, Fax: (802)828-2154

Virgin Islands
Vera Falu, Commissioner, Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, Property and Procurement Building, Subbase #1, Room 205, St. Thomas, VI 00802
(809)774-3130, Fax: (809)776-0605

continued on page 12

Director, from page 4

continue to provide tests that are nationally recognized, valid and reliable. People take the GED Tests to earn a high school diploma. It's our responsibility to ensure that this diploma has meaning to institutions of higher education and employers.

This fee increase will allow us to develop the 2000 series tests, implement more stringent security procedures and ensure sustained financial viability. There will be no additional price increases from GEDTS before 2001. In addition, we will perform feasibility studies as we explore options for the new tests and delivery systems, and involve the GED Administrators in decisions that could raise the cost of the new series.

I hope this explanation answers your questions about the status of the GED Testing Service. We thank you, our partners, for both your support and guidance through this critical time.

Consumer Protection, from page 11

Virginia

Frank Seales, Jr., Chief, Antitrust and Consumer Litigation Section, Office of Attorney General, 900 E. Main St. Richmond, VA 23219
(804)786-2116, Fax: (804)371-2086

Robert E. Colvin, Project Manager Office of Consumer Affairs, Department of Agriculture and, Consumer Services, Washington Building, Suite 100, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23219
(804)786-2042, TDD: (804)371-6344, Fax: (804)371-7479
Toll free in VA: (800)552-9963

Also contact the nearest Commonwealth's Attorney, or the Office of Consumer Affairs for the county where you live.

Washington

Contact the nearest Consumer Protection Division, Office of the Attorney General in: Bellingham, Kennewick, Olympia, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, or Vancouver. Call the local number listed or:
Toll free in WA: (800)551-4636
TDD toll free in WA: (800)276-9883

West Virginia

Jill Miles, Deputy Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division, Office of Attorney General, 812 Quarrier St. 6th Floor, Charleston, WV 25301
(304)558-8986, Fax: (304)558-0184
Toll free in WV: (800)368-8808

The city where you live may operate a Department of Consumer Protection.

Wisconsin

William Oemichen, Administrator Division of Trade and Consumer Protection, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, 2811 Agriculture Drive, P.O. Box 8911, Madison, WI 53708
(608)224-4950, Fax: (608)224-4939
Toll free in WI: (800)422-7128

There are regional offices in Altoona, Green Bay, and Milwaukee. Also contact your local District Attorney or Sheriff.

Wyoming

Mark Moran, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Attorney General 123 State Capitol Building Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307)777-7874, Fax: (307)777-6869

GED Items
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Volume 13 Number 3 AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION May/June 1997

More Adults Complete GED Tests; Most Plan Further Education

Record numbers of adults in the United States and Canada completed the General Educational Development (GED) Tests and earned their high school equivalency diplomas last year, says an annual report released Monday, June 2, 1997. A higher percentage of them also indicated that they planned to use the diploma to pursue postsecondary education and training.

The report, *Who Took the GED?*, finds than more than three-quarters of a million people (758,570) completed the GED Tests in 1996—that's a five percent increase over the previous year and the largest number in the 54-year history of the program. More than half a million (524,482) GED test takers earned their diplomas last year by meeting their jurisdictions' score requirements. This figure beats the previous record set in 1995 and represents a 16 percent improvement in the program-wide pass rate over the past decade.

"It's great news for the nation that the number of people who earn GED diplomas each year continues to grow," said Stanley O. Ikenberry, President of American Council on Education (ACE), the association which operates the GED Testing Service. "It's even better news that the majority plan to go on to college or other forms of postsecondary education."

Nearly 65 percent of those who took at least one of the five tests during 1996 reported that they wanted to earn the diploma to qualify for further education and training.

Nearly 65 percent...reported that they wanted to earn the diploma to qualify for further education and training.

In some jurisdictions, notably American Samoa, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, Northwest Territories and Virgin Islands, this figure exceeded 85 percent. Janet Baldwin, Director of Research for GEDTS, noted, "These numbers show that the GED increasingly is being viewed as a stepping stone to further advancement."

Several jurisdictions reported that more than 88 percent of their examinees earned scores high enough to qualify for the jurisdiction's equivalency diploma. These jurisdictions include the Canadian and United States military, Alaska, Idaho, Iowa (see GED Items, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 5), Maine, Nebraska, Oregon, Vermont and Wyoming.

The score requirements for members of the military vary depending on the service member's residency; Alaska, Iowa, Maine, Vermont, and Wyoming employed a minimum score requirement of 35 on each test and a 45 average during calendar year 1996 (a standard met by 70 percent of graduating high school seniors). Idaho and Oregon were using the new program-wide minimum score requirement of 40 and 45 during 1996 (66 percent). The score standard in effect for Nebraska during 1996 was a minimum of 40 on each test or an average of 45 (75 percent). Effective January 1, 1997, the minimum standard score was raised to 40 and 45 for all jurisdictions offering equivalency diplomas based on GED test scores.

In 1996, Texas became the first jurisdiction to test more than 100,000 people in a single calendar year. Since 1971, the Lone Star state has awarded more than one million GED credentials.

The average age of GED diploma recipients in the U.S. and territories last year was 25. In Canada, the average age was 30. Nearly four in five (78 percent) GED credentials earned worldwide are awarded to

continued on page 8

Inside Items

Viewpoint . . . . . page 2

Teaching Tips 6

News and Notes 4

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Silence May be False Indicator

Teaching GED courses can be both exhilarating and exasperating. To become a GED instructor, I was told I must be willing to speak for two and one-half hours (7:00 to 9:30 PM) to a half-asleep audience. Little more than this was revealed about the position.

by Diana M. Estill

Having been a teenage parent and high school dropout, I wanted to set an example. With a tenth grade education and a GED certificate for a springboard, I graduated *summa cum laude* with a B.B.A. degree. If I could do it, others could, too. This is the message I wanted to deliver.

In blissful ignorance, I contacted the local junior college to apply for a GED position. "I want this job so much...heck, I'd probably teach these classes for free," I told the program's director.

"Well, good," she chuckled, "because that's just about what you'll be doing."

No training was available. She handed me the current textbook and the name and telephone number of another GED course instructor. "Call her if you need any help with lesson planning," my new supervisor said.

The text, over 500 pages long, barely fit in my brief case. I couldn't imagine how anyone could cover that much material in 25 classroom hours. I remembered that telephone number and called to find out.

When Ms. Wizard (not her real name, of course) answered my call, she had such a sweet, grandmotherly-sounding voice that I wanted to ask for her best cookie recipe instead of magical lesson plans. Desperate, yet hopeful, I voiced my concern.

"Why of COURSE you can't cover the WHOLE book, dear," the retired high school English teacher told me. "You just do the best you can."

The first day of class arrived before I'd barely finished skimming the material. When I saw "Geometry," sheer panic gripped me. It had been 20 years since I'd taken the GED Tests, and they hadn't included geometry then. I hadn't encountered geometry in college either. How could I now teach what I hadn't ever been taught?

I'd never been particularly adept with spatial references; how could I teach myself? Trudging through this section of the book, I used cola cans and shoe box lids to grasp the methods for computing the volume of cylinders and area of rectangles. It worked, so I decided to teach these concepts using the same visual props that had solidified them for me.

To my disappointment, my GED class was taught off-campus, at a high school eight miles away. I had hoped to expose my GED students to the college experience to prime them for further educational pursuits. There's an energy on college campuses that one simply doesn't feel after hours in deteriorating high school classrooms.

Upon arrival for my first class, I found the desks too small for many to use and a teacher's desk cluttered with daytime activities. Looking out at the sea of blank expressions, I noted the few visible textbooks were the WRONG COLOR!

At least a third of the class didn't have a book, and those who did had been sold the wrong text by the college bookstore. Since we weren't on campus, a quick exchange was out of the question. Even worse, the bookstore was open late only one night per week—the same night as our class.

The text, over 500 pages long, barely fit in my brief case. I couldn't imagine how anyone could cover that much material in 25 classroom hours.

Books aside, my first priority was to determine the number of years of education each student had completed. One man in his mid-forties said he had dropped out of school in the fifth grade—in Mexico. He had been permitted, with little more than a primary school education and limited command of the English language, to register for GED Preparation.

By the time I had finished teaching my first GED class, I had enough material to add three pages to the "Instructor's Comments" section of the course evaluation form.

My program director responded, though she couldn't do much to help. Classroom space on campus was limited. The off-site location had been selected because more students dropped out of that high school than any other in the area. Classes taught at this location, she

explained, were convenient to those who needed them most.

Tutoring, which I had requested for many in dire need, was not available because GED Preparation was a NON-CREDIT course.

The challenges related to teaching mathematical formulas at 9:00 PM had been noted by previous instructors, also. However, this was the only time slot available. (By the time I dismissed class each night, the lawn sprinklers were on and the parking lot lights were off.)

After two years of teaching under these circumstances, I looked at my instructor's contract for the upcoming semester and set it aside.

At the final class session that semester, I greeted my handful of remaining students. A young woman I'll call Sylvia was sitting, as usual, front center. She stared back at me with her now-familiar, comatose look. I'd been unable to ascertain whether Sylvia was fluent in English. Since she refused to participate in group discussions, I concluded that she wasn't.

Again, that night, I felt as though I were chipping at a glacier with an ice pick.

By 9:00, I was so excited to have completed the semester, I let class go a half-hour early. Sprinting the entire four blocks to my car, I slowed as I neared the vehicle and began to chant, "No. I will not sign that contract! I'm through with this exercise in futility. I have had enough!"

I felt as though I were chipping at a glacier with an ice pick.

"Miss... Miss. Excuse me," a small voice called out.

I turned—and saw Sylvia.

"Yes?" I inquired, somewhat startled.

"I just wanted to tell you how much this class meant to me," she began. With one arm outstretched, she displayed an infant's photo dangling from her key chain. "Ever since little David died, I haven't had much to look forward to," she continued. "He got some kind of meningitis and died two days after we found out about it. It happened last year." She paused for a moment.

Words failed to surface from my heart, which now ached at the sound of her confession. My interpretation of her silence and withdrawn demeanor had been tragically inaccurate. Here, literally under my nose for ten weeks, had been a woman who had just lost her two-year-old child. I had not known because I hadn't sought to learn the mystery behind her sullenness.

"I know I'll pass my GED," Sylvia began again. "The way you showed us how to do math was really good. I understood it...and I never did in high school." I wished Sylvia luck in her new life, drove straight home, found my contract for the next semester—and signed it.

It is easy to become skeptical of those who remain silent in the classroom and of your own teaching ability whenever little feedback is forthcoming.

Silence, I have learned, is not always an indicator of a student's or an instructor's deficiencies. In fact, Sylvia taught me more than I think I taught her.

Diana Estill is a Dallas-based freelance writer whose articles have appeared nationally in such newspapers as ***The Washington Post***, ***The Miami Herald***, *and* ***The Dallas Morning News***. *She was recently selected to serve as a U.S. Delegate to UNESCO's Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, which takes place in Hamburg, Germany in mid-July.*

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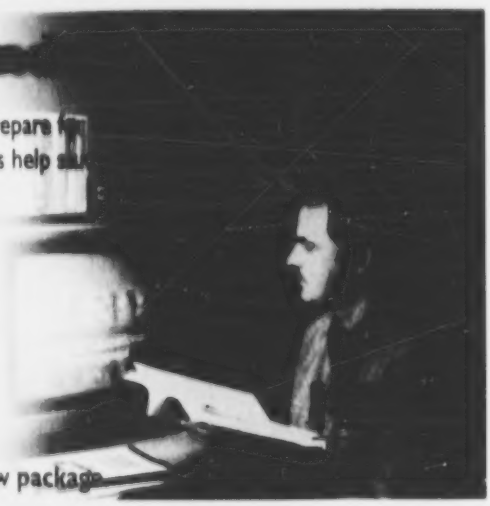

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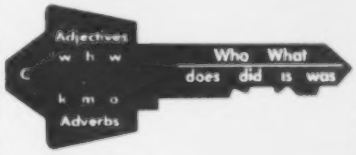

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News and Notes

NAASLN Makes a Move

The National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs (NAASLN) is moving its association headquarters to Washington, DC. NAASLN, a practitioner-centered membership association, is dedicated to helping all Americans become lifelong learners and productive citizens through learner-centered programs that address the needs of adults with disabilities and other special needs.

The association's president is William R. Langner. NAASLN's new offices are located at 808 17th Street, Suite 200, Washington, DC, 20006-3910, (202) 223-9669.

Clinton Letters Available

Congratulatory letters to GED graduates from President Clinton are now in stock at the GED Testing Service offices in Washington. As in previous years, the letters, printed on White House stationery and suitable for framing provide a "pat on the back" to recent GED graduates.

To obtain copies, specify the name of your GED Testing Center, Chief Examiner and the quantity desired in writing. Mail or fax to the attention of Clarice Ulu at GEDTS, One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 250, Washington, DC, 20036, fax (202)775-8578. Orders are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. One order per testing center, please.

House Focuses on Adult Ed and Training Needs

The House of Representatives on March 30 passed H.R. 1385, the Employment, Training, and Literacy Enhancement Act of 1997. The bill consolidates more than 50 programs into three block grants to states; one for adult employment and training, one for training disadvantaged youth, and a third for adult education and literacy.

A related bill, focusing on vocational education, is scheduled for introduction in the House and committee markup in mid-June. As currently proposed, funding authorized for the voc ed bill would go to secondary schools as well as postsecondary institutions and would provide for the continuation of the popular and successful tech prep programs. In the Administration's version of the bill, 15 percent of the funds would go for statewide programs, such as technology projects, and 5 percent would go toward administrative costs. The House bill seeks to reduce these levels and mandate that more funds go directly to local programs.

The Senate version rolls the two House bills into one, with separate authorizations from the three "funding streams" — voc ed, adult ed, and job training. The Senate bill is expected to be ready for introduction by early July.

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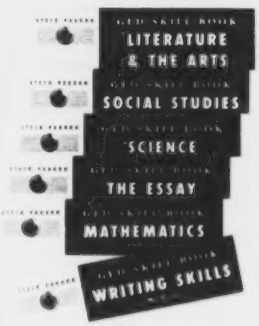

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World Class Teachers for World Class Learning

...Are You an Accomplished Teacher?

by Adrian Davis

Many exemplary teachers work in the nation's schools, but their work is not rewarded, appreciated, and used properly. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was established to correct these problems by recognizing and certifying excellence in teaching.

According to the National Board for Professional Teaching (NBPTS), the world class schools America requires cannot exist without a world-class teaching force. Only persons who have been properly educated and trained to work with the diversity of students in America are best qualified to accurately evaluate student needs and progress, to translate complex material into language students understand, and to exercise and act on sound and principled professional judgment in the face of uncertainty.

NBPTS' core propositions for accomplished teachers embody these characteristics. They forcefully state that accomplished teachers:

- are committed to students and learning
- know their subject matter, and how to teach it to their students
- manage and monitor student learning
- think systematically about and learn from their teaching, and
- are members of learning communities.

NBPTS believes that the single most important action the nation can take to improve schools is to strengthen teaching. A 63-member Board of Directors, the majority of whom are practicing teachers, govern NBPTS. The NBPTS is supported by governors, teachers unions and school board leaders, administrators, college and university officials, business executives, foundations and citizens. NBPTS works to:

- establish high standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do,

NBPTS Social Studies/History Teaching Standards Summary

Preparing for Student Learning

Knowledge of Students

Teachers understand students' cognitive, physical, and social development in order to guide their practice and relationships with students.

Knowledge of Subject Matter

Teachers possess broad knowledge of social studies and history to establish curriculum based on major concepts, themes, and processes in those subjects.

Advancing Student Learning

Advancing Disciplinary Knowledge & Understanding

Teachers use strategies that engage students in learning about U.S. and World History, Economics, Political Science, and Geography.

Promoting Social Understanding

Teachers use strategies that promote understanding of sociology, culture, and future trends.

Developing Civic Competence

Teachers develop in students the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for responsible citizenship in a constitutional democracy.

Supporting Student Learning

Instructional Resources

Teachers select, adapt, and create varied resources for social studies and history and use them productively.

Learning Environments

Teachers create and foster learning environments characterized by trust, equity, risk-taking, independence, and collaboration.

Assessment

Teachers employ a variety of methods to obtain useful information about students' learning and development to assist students in reflecting on their own progress.

Reflection

Teachers consider their practice, using student performance and developments in the field to extend their knowledge, improve their teaching skills, and refine their philosophy of education.

Family Partnerships

Teachers understand and value the role of parents and guardians; seeking partnership with them.

Professional Contributions

Teachers work with others to foster growth and development of colleagues, school, and their field.

- develop and operate a national voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet the standards, and
- advance related education reforms to improve student learning.

NBTPS is developing standards for teachers in more than 30 certificate fields, and assessments to measure achievement of those standards. One of those fields is Social Studies/History.

The NBPTS Social Studies/ History Teaching Standards

In 1992, at the behest of the National Board, committees of elementary, middle, and secondary social studies-history teachers and professionals began developing advanced standards for teachers of students ages 7-18 and older. The standards are an important part of the art and science of social studies and history teaching.

Teacher Assessment: Includes Portfolio

The National Board Certification process provides an extensive professional development experience and it measures accomplishments through a two-part assessment a portfolio prepared at the school site, and written exercises completed at an assessment center.

The portfolio and assessment gives teachers the opportunity to demonstrate their practice and reflect on their own teaching. In the school site portfolio, teachers show examples of their practice including:

- their students' work,
- videotapes of classwork,
- written commentaries by the teacher on his or her own work, and
- evidence of their contributions to their professional community.

At the assessment center, teachers show their expertise by responding to a series of exercises questioning them about their knowledge and teaching strategies.

Take Control of Your Teaching Destiny!

Consider participating in the assessment process. You can prepare for candidacy by ordering and reviewing the standards for your certificate area. Call 1-800-22TEACH to order the standards in your field ($5).

If this is not the ideal time for you to pursue National Board Certification, or if NBPTS certification is not yet available, you can still participate in the work of the National Board by promoting your own professional teaching excellence.

Focus on Your Development

- Think and write about your teaching philosophy (*What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*, $1.50, from NBPTS can help focus your analysis of your own teaching philosophy).
- Think through some of the best things you have done in your classroom during the past five years and why they so effectively engaged students. Start a portfolio of these examples.
- Consider taking a writing process class to strengthen your writing skills and to become more adept at writing.
- Videotape your classes; analyze how you teach and how students respond to your teaching.
- Update your resume describing your professional development experiences, service to the community, and work with students' families.
- Establish a network of teachers with whom you can work on professional development. (NBPTS can help with on-line bulletin boards.)
- Visit the official web site of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards at: http://www.nbpts.org

The single most important action the nation can take to improve schools is to strengthen teaching.

The Greater Good

- Make issues of quality and accomplished teaching an important part of your school or training center improvement efforts.
- Work to create incentives and rewards for accomplished teaching in your school or center.
- Organize a study group for your

continued on page 8

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Teacher Excellence from page 7

school, center, or campus that promotes excellent teaching.

- Include social studies-history teaching standards in the orientation packet for new teachers at your school, center, or campus.
- Meet with staff development committee to design professional growth for teachers who may or may not wish to pursue National Board Certification.

Adrian Davis is an Executive Associate, Education Policy and Reform at the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and sits on the National Council for the Social Studies Board of Directors. She has also served on the GED Social Studies Test Specifications Committee for the GED 2000 series of tests.

Who Took the GED? from page 1

people under age 29. As in previous years, 67 percent of examinees reported completing tenth grade or higher before leaving school. More than one in three (37 percent) said they finished the eleventh grade.

"... the GED increasingly is being viewed as a stepping stone to further advancement."

—Janet Baldwin
Director of Research

"While more than half a million adults each year earn their equivalency diplomas through the GED Tests," said GEDTS interim Director Joan Auchter, "there are 44 million Americans who haven't finished high school. Completing high school is a dividing line between those who advance their careers and those who struggle for entry level, minimum wage jobs. The GED provides the adults who choose to pursue it a way back into the system." In 1995, the mean income of men 25 and older who had not completed was $19,150; those with traditional diplomas or GED credentials earned a mean income of $27,952.

The number of modified test administrations for candidates with disabilities also rose last year. The number of special testing requests reached 5,567—a 14 percent increase over 1995. Accommodations for candidates with disabilities include extended time, special optical or reading devices, alternative answer-recording methods, and other modifications to the standard testing environment.

Who Took the GED? GED 1996 Statistical Report is available for $20 U.S. plus $5 shipping and handling from the GED Fulfillment Service, P.O. Box 261, Annapolis Junction, MD, (301) 604-7073, fax (301) 604-0158.

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VOLUME 14, NUMBER 4/5 AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1997

Summer Conference Focuses on Present Needs, Plans for Future Tests

Enthusiastic responses from attendees at the GED Annual Conference indicate that the meeting fulfilled its intended goals: "lassoing the loose ends" of current program delivery and laying the foundations for delivering the next series of GED Tests, known as "GED 2000."

"This was one of the most interesting, informative, and yet challenging conferences held," remarked Emma Rhodes, GED Administrator for Arkansas.

The heart of old San Antonio and shimmering July heat set the stage for this year's meeting of GED Administrators—the men and women responsible for managing the GED testing program in the United States, Canada, and their territories. Several local GED Examiners also attended, joined by representatives of leading adult education publishing firms, scoring service representatives, and many members of the GED Advisory Committee. In all, more than 170 people registered for the conference—the largest attendance ever for a national GED conference.

Bill Box, former GED Administrator for Mississippi, accepts the GED Distinguished Service Award from Joan Auchter, Director of the GED Testing Service.

Attendees spent long but productive days evaluating many aspects of the program. Among the broad range of topics covered were: test security and the training of testing center staff; special testing for adults with specific learning disabilities; and specifications for and construction of GED 2000.

The Administrators examined many of the issues in small groups and brought recommendations back for discussion in general sessions. Over the coming months and years, the ideas and opinions expressed in this meeting will form the core of more coherent, uniform policies under which the GED testing program operates.

Test Security and Staff Training

Conference attendees reviewed and discussed the recommendations made by the security task force which met in December, 1996, (see the January/February 1997 issue of *GED Items*). The topics they covered included: the rules governing addendum sites; issues surrounding centralizing record keeping at the state, provincial, or territorial level; policies for combining test scores; implementing a "window" during which candidates must complete all the tests in the battery and similar restrictions on retesting; qualifications and training of GED Examiners; and creating a job description for the new GED field representatives who will provide technical assistance to GED Administrators and local centers.

While some policies have yet to become fully concrete and won't be

continued on page 12

Inside *Items*

From the Director 2

GED Graduate Story 3

News and Notes 15

Legislative Update 6

School Standards 8

Teaching Tips 4

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From the Director

GED Will Thrive on Mix of Partnership, Communication, Wisdom

by Joan E. Auchter

More than 100 years ago, a tailor named Levi Strauss adapted tent material into trousers that could endure the demands of goldmining and railroading. We recognize the name today as a mark of quality because the product evolved to fit today's lifestyle while remaining functional and durable.

GED also has brand-name recognition based on our 55-year history of providing an opportunity for adults to earn a high school equivalency diploma. To ensure the durability and viability of our tests and diplomas for 2000 and beyond, we must chart new trails, conquer new frontiers. For the many adults seeking destinations aboard the GED "wagon train," we must ensure that the trip is worth taking, that we deliver a quality product on which they can depend.

As expedition leaders, we must plan carefully, learn new skills, and select appropriate partners as we move to 2000 and beyond. We are experiencing an educational reform movement throughout the United States and much of the world. Many of our states, provinces, and territories are setting new educational standards, businesses are partnering with schools, and access to higher education is, according to President Clinton, every citizen's right.

We see the requirements of higher education and the workplace coalescing in a way that reveals a false dichotomy: it is not an either...or situation, rather it's one of both...and. Replacing outdated notions of distance and hierarchy with a vision of parity and partnership between education and the workplace is essential to maintaining democracy. GED today—and more strongly as we envision the 2000 series tests—must integrate the spheres of school and work.

For the many adults seeking destinations aboard the GED "wagon train," we must ensure that the trip is worth taking.

Welfare reform is opening partnership possibilities for GED to assume a leadership role in breaking the cycle of poverty. We must take the opportunity to team up with policy makers to support education and employment initiatives that could benefit GED candidates. Working in partnership with GED staff, Steck-Vaughn has developed a boilerplate brochure that can be adapted for use in these efforts.

More broadly, there are the educators, employers, and economists (the "E^3 factor") beyond our immediate community to whom we must better communicate the value of the GED diploma. Often our graduates and the program are criticized for not meeting standards set for other purposes. At our conference this summer, several GED graduates gave anecdotal evidence of how a GED diploma can provide a "leg up" to self-sufficiency, college, and a better job. We need to help frame the research questions that will focus on the benefits experienced over time by the individuals who take and pass the tests. GEDTS has earmarked outreach dollars to target fact sheets to these three audiences.

Open and clear communication is critical to our success. While we may not always reach consensus, we can reach common understandings and share the results of our discussions with the appropriate audiences.

Unlike the tailor who made an affordable fashion statement, we deliver a social value that empowers individuals. To meet society's changing needs and maintain the credibility of the GED diploma, we must lead by wisdom rather than by the seat of our pants. It will be an interesting, rewarding, and challenging journey for us all.

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Editor & Advertising Manager: Lisa Richards Hone
Circulation Manager: Debra Louallen-Cole

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Two Adult Learners, Two Very Different Stories

Two graduates of the Community Education/Adult Literacy programs in Greece, New York, received the state's "Student of the Year" Award this spring.

by Sue Sepkowski and Marty Murray

Charles Gottschalk and Bridget Barback were among 13 from across the state who traveled to the capital at Albany to meet their state Sentor and Assemblyperson, and accept their awards at a special luncheon.

In Albany, NY, to accept their "Student of the Year" awards are Charles Gottschalk and Bridget Barback (second and third from left). Joining them, from left to right, are GED instructor Sue Sepkowski, New York State Senator Jim Alessi, Adult Life Management Instructor Marty Murray, and Facilitator Tammy DeCecca.

Charles Gottshalk

"Charles Gottschalk, a bright man" is what Charlie chose to put on his letterhead. A simple statement for most people, for him it is an affirmation that has been many years in the making.

Born with autism in a less enlightened era, Charlie was misdiagnosed as "retarded" at age four. His family was told he would never read or write and never progress beyond his present level. More than forty years later, Charles Gottshalk earned his GED diploma.

The world, in turn, found out that [Charlie] had taught himself to read, spell, and do math—including square roots—on his own.

Even as autism isolated him from the world outside, his inner spark burned brightly. Being nonverbal, he simply needed a way to let the rest of the world see it. At home, Charlie found little ways to let his family know he was "in there." His sister, Jean Gottshalk, recalls "One day he saved our brother's and my life by applying the brake in the car before it rolled into traffic. He arranged the National Geographic magazines in chronological order. And he took apart clocks, put them back together again, and they worked!" She adds that he always had a great sense of humor which he showed by teasing their father.

As he grew up, Charlie attended various programs. However, since special education was in its infancy, there were times when nothing was available, so he stayed home for many years until a new center opened. After several years, he transferred to a day treatment program, where in 1990 a speech pathologist began using Facilitated Communication (FC) with Charlie.

Using FC, Charlie is able to communicate with the "outside world" by typing on a keyboard. The world, in turn, found out that this remarkable man had taught himself to read, spell, and do math—including square roots—on his own. As more people began to use FC, Charlie was able to let his personality shine through. "We learned first hand," continues Jean Gottshalk, "what autism is like for him, and how he knew he was withdrawing and couldn't stop it. We learned what a compassionate person he is, how important his friends and family are to him, and most importantly, we learned what he wants out of life. He wants to be 'normal' and

continued on page 5

Turning Tables on Traditional Classroom Roles Allows for Mix of Skill Levels, Content Areas

by John Gordon

At the Open Book, we organize a lot of our curriculum around themes or topics, usually generated by students. We've studied issues like warfare, drugs, and housing; themes like Health, Dreams, and Love and Romance; topics from history like Columbus and the Conquest, the American Revolution, Slavery and the Civil War.

I often begin our study of a theme with an exercise I call "50 Questions." The exercise itself is simple. Let's say we are going to be spending the next month or two reading and writing about Domestic Violence. I ask the class to come up with 50 questions on Domestic Violence or abuse. What would they like to know about it? I act as a recorder.

As people start to ask questions, I copy them down—on a piece of paper, not on the board. If I write them on the board, students will start to copy the questions down instead of trying to think of more questions. This is an oral exercise; I want people to be putting their energy into thinking and listening, not writing.

Generally, the questions start slowly, almost painfully. But as the exercise continues, the questions begin to come more quickly. Sometimes I have to ask people to slow down. I try to keep everyone involved, encouraging those who haven't spoken up to ask some questions.

When the activity works well, the nature of the process begins to change. Students forget about reaching the magic number of fifty and begin to bounce off each other. "Yeah, and what about..." Questions begin to shift from "What is...?" to "Why...?" and "How...?"

All study is defined by the questions we ask. There are different kinds of questions. Which kind, if any, are more important?

Usually I'll try to type the questions up and bring them back to the next class. We read them individually and in small groups. I often ask everyone to circle the five questions most important to them. This activity works well in the small groups. Then we might read them in the large group and discuss which ones people circled.

One of the nice features of this exercise is that the traditional classroom roles are reversed: the students are placed in the somewhat unfamiliar role of asking questions and I become the listener. The questions that the class develops can be used to frame the investigation into the topic. The questions are also a good source of writing assignments. You can return to them midway through the unit. You can paste them up on the wall. There are lots of possibilities.

If your class has very beginning readers in it, the questions themselves are a good source of text. Because the students participated in creating the questions, they likely to remember them. Moreover, the repetitive format—What is..., Who is..., Why are..., etc.—makes them more reader friendly. [For students at the advanced end of the scale, the questions could easily provide a starting point for teaching library skills or research techniques! —Ed.]

Finally, the exercise models good intellectual practice. All study is defined by the questions we ask. There are different kinds of questions. Which kind, if any, are more important? And, of course, who gets to pose the questions?

John Gordon is the Director of the Open Book, a community-based organization in Brooklyn, NY. This article first appeared in the February 1996 issue of the ***Literacy Update****. The exercise also appears in Gordon's book,* ***More Than a Job, A Curriculum on Work and Society*** *(New Readers Press, 1991) and was adapted from a concept described to him years earlier by Ira Shor at a Literacy Assistance Center workshop.*

Got a great teaching technique or staff inservice workshop? Share it with your fellow ***Items*** *readers! Contact Lisa Richards Hone at (202) 939-9493 for article specifications.*

Very Different from page 3

dislikes the stigma of autism. To him, earning his GED means that he is 'normal'."

Bridget Barback

"Bridget is a success. She overcame many obstacles to get where she is today," says her teacher, Marty Murray, "and all of us who know her are proud of her achievements."

Not so long ago, Bridget was not such a success. She started using drugs at age 14 and left school, pregnant, at age 17. "Nobody cared," Bridget says, adding that, "if I could just get high, everybody would love me." Her marriage to the child's father lasted six months.

Later, Bridget lost her son in a custody battle. She ambled from job to job, from relationship to relationship; "looking for love," she adds, in reference to the popular country and western song, "in all the wrong places."

As many parents do, Bridget struggled with finding and keeping adequate day care for her children.

At 25, Bridget found herself wandering around, not knowing who or where she was, thinking she was going to die. Instead she called a friend, who helped her enter a rehab program. After eight months in the program, Bridget left clean and sober. She met her husband, John, and they began to build a life together. Over the next nine years they had three children and moved to Rochester (NY). Yet something was missing in Bridget's life. So she went back to school.

Eligible for social services, Bridget enrolled in Greece Community's GED ON TV and applied for cosmetology school, but her funding was rejected. Bridget saw a dead end, but her employment counselor saw an opportunity and encouraged her to apply for the daytime program where she could also learn computer skills and take training to develop workplace skills. Bridget decided to give it a try.

As many parents do, Bridget struggled with finding and keeping adequate day care for her children. She juggled schedules and sitters. Bad weather, cantankerous old cars, and the needs of her disabled brother became exercises in creative problem solving. But Bridget wasn't giving up. She'd found that her GED diploma was that missing "something."

While waiting for her test scores, Bridget gained experience in a clerical internship with the GED ON TV and Life Management Skills programs.

After learning that she had passed the GED Tests, Bridget attended an Office Technology program. She completed the program and through its job club, found temporary positions, including one in a dermatologist's office.

Last September, Bridget became a full-time employee. She has benefits, a checking account and a savings account. And, for the first time in her life, she's filing income taxes.

Bridget continues to study; now to learn more about dermatology and prepare for the civil service exams. Off social services and "never going back," Bridget feels great about herself and the transforming experience of the local adult education programs that helped her change her life.

Sue Sepkowski teaches GED preparation and Marty Murray teaches life management skills to adults for the Community Education division of the Greece, NY, Central School District. For more information about the district's adult programs, contact Anne Granger, Lead Instructor, (716) 621-1000 ext. 3021.

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— Suzanne DuPlantier, Adult Ed Specialist, Baton Rouge, LA

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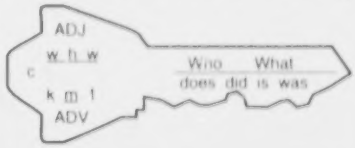

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—Curriculum Manual, 1995

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Balanced Budget Agreement Aims to Broaden Access to Higher Ed

The budget agreement signed by President Clinton August 5 is being touted as "the largest investment in higher education since the G.I. Bill." While the agreement promises to balance the federal budget by 2002, it also provides $95 billion in net tax cuts over five years, and increases domestic spending for a few priority items, including higher education.

Department of Education Secretary Richard W. Riley called the plan "smart tax policy and smart education policy for the 21st century. Just as we used the tax code to stimulate investment in factories and equipment during the Industrial Age, we will now use the tax code to stimulate investment in our people for the Information Age."

Among the many tax provisions that will help Americans save and pay for college are: a version of the President's Hope Scholarship tax credit proposal; a tax credit for upperclassmen and graduate students; a $2,500 student loan interest deduction; penalty-free withdrawal from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) for college expenses and new Education IRAs; expansion of state prepaid tuition plans to cover room and board; and loan forgiveness for community service.

The tax agreement fails to extend permanently the exemption for employer-provided educational assistance, or to exempt employer-approved assistance to graduate students. Congressional negotiators also repealed the tax-exempt status of the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association-College Retirement Equities Fund.

Funding for programs such as Pell Grants, Federal Work-Study, TRIO, and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and for the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, will be completed after Congress resumes in September.

The landmark Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 (H.R. 2014) is designed to help students and families save for college, pay tuition bills, and repay student loans. There is no precedent for such sweeping use of the tax code to help families pay for higher education. The tax credits, deductions, and Education IRA contribution levels are phased out for individuals and families whose adjusted gross income falls in upper-level ranges.

HOPE Scholarship and Lifelong Learning Tax Credits

- Tax credit of up to $1,500 (100 percent of the first $1,000 in tuition, and 50 percent of the second $1,000 in tuition and mandatory fees), minus all grants and scholarships, for classes starting on or after January 1, 1998. Students must be enrolled at least half-time to be eligible.
- Also a "lifelong learning" tax credit (20 percent of the first $5,000, later increasing to $10,000 in tuition) in the years after the HOPE tax credit is claimed. The credit applies to undergraduate and graduate education, as well as education to acquire or improve job skills.

Student Loan Interest Deduction

- Phases in a tax deduction for interest paid in the first 60 months on any student loan used to pay college expenses. The maximum deduction will be $1,000 in 1998, $1,500 in 1999, $2,000 in 2000, and $2,500 in 2001 and thereafter. Taxpayers will be able to claim the benefit whether they itemize or claim a standard deduction.

Education Savings Plans

- Allows penalty-free withdrawals from IRAs for undergraduate and graduate education, beginning January 1, 1998. The same tax rules will apply whether an individual takes funds from an IRA for retirement or to pay college expenses.
- Also establishes "Education IRAs" that can be funded with annual, nondeductible contributions of up to $500 per child, beginning January 1, 1998. Earnings on these accounts are tax-free if used to pay college expenses.

Prepaid Tuition

- Expands state prepaid tuition plans to include room and board expenses.

Loan Forgiveness for Community Service

- Permits the tax-free treatment of student loans forgiven by nonprofit organizations, such as colleges and universities, for work in public service jobs.
- Does not extend to borrowers whose remaining debt is forgiven after 25 years in the income contingent repayment plan offered through the Ford Direct Student Loan Program.

The preceding information was excerpted from a paper prepared and distributed by the American Council on Education's Division of Government and Public Affairs in August, 1997.

U.S. Gov't Relies on Accuracy of GED Annual Statistical Report Data

Now there are two annual statistical publications produced by the U.S. Department of Education which include tables that rely on GED Annual Statistical Report data generated by the American Council on Education (ACE).

> *"These ACE data are described as more accurate than the data collected through...the Bureau of the Census."*
>
> *—Janet Baldwin*
> *Director of Research*

Both publications are produced by the Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics Office of Educational Research Initiatives. The *Digest of Education Statistics* includes a table developed by GED Testing Service Senior Research Associate Sen Qi, based on data from the ACE publication, *Who Took the GED? The GED Annual Statistical Report*. The table describes trends in the number of GED credentials issued, number completing the battery, and number of test takers by age group from 1971 to the present.

A second report, *Dropout Rates in the United States*, has included, since 1995, a graph showing trends in the number of 18–24 year olds who received a GED credential in a given year, for 1990 to 1995. The American Council on Education is cited as the source of this information. "These ACE data," says Janet Baldwin, GEDTS' Director of Research, "are described as more accurate than the data collected through the Current Population Survey of the Bureau of the Census." She adds, "it's great to have such validation from national statistical agencies."

Excerpts from the Annual Statistical Report can be viewed at http://www.acenet.edu/programs/CALEC/GED/home.html. Select "New from GED".

Who Took the GED? The GED Annual Statistical Report may be ordered from the GED Fulfillment Service, P.O. Box 261, Annapolis Junction, MD, (301) 604-7073, fax (301) 604-0158.

Auchter, Robinson Named to Open Positions at ACE

The American Council on Education (ACE) in August named Joan E. Auchter the new Director of the GED Testing Service (GEDTS).

Auchter, who has been serving as interim Director since November, 1996, will continue to do "double duty" as Director of GEDTS' Test Development Unit until that position is filled. Auchter joined GEDTS in 1987 to design and implement the essay portion of the Writing Skills Test.

Also this summer, Susan Porter Robinson was tapped to take over as Director of ACE's Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials (CALEC). Formerly the CALEC's Director of Outreach and Marketing, Robinson earlier served ACE as the GED Language Arts Test Editor and as the second editor of *GED Items*. She replaces Henry A. Spille, who retired earlier this year.

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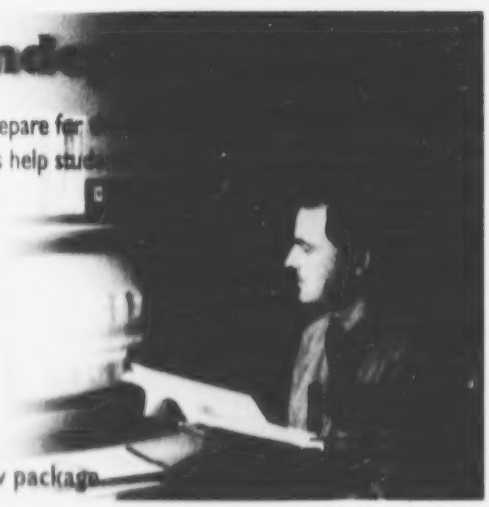

School Standards

U.S. Fourth-Graders' Science, Math Performance Improving, Says Comparison Study

Washington, D.C.

The recent results of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) show that our nation's fourth-graders are near the very top in science achievement in the world. America's fourth-graders are also doing better than ever in mastering the basics of arithmetic. This is the first time in any international comparison that American students in a given grade have exceeded the international average in both mathematics and science.

"The latest TIMSS results show that America's kids can compete with students anywhere in the world," U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley said.

TIMSS is the most thorough international study of math and science education ever conducted, comparing the performance of a half million students, including 33,000 Americans, at levels corresponding to U.S. grades 4, 8, and 12. The fourth grade findings were in contrast to the TIMSS results released last November showing that our nation's eighth-graders scored above average in science but below the international average in mathematics.

"The results today give us a road map to higher performance," President Clinton said in his announcement of the fourth grade TIMSS findings. "We're doing a very good job in the early grades, but we've got a lot more work to do in the later ones."

TIMSS data suggests that grades 4 through 8 are years that warrant special attention for U.S. students so that by the eighth grade, all children can master challenging mathematics, including the foundations of algebra and geometry. Students need to reach this level by the eighth grade so they will be ready for the more advanced courses in high school that will prepare them for college, productive employment, and lifelong learning.

A number of successful programs across the country help students strengthen mathematics skills between grades 4 and 8. For example, the Jasper Woodbury Series, developed by Vanderbilt University and the National Science Foundation, focuses on grades 5 through 9. The series is designed to align with the standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and is being used in schools across the country. For more information, contact Tom Noser at (615) 322-8070, or consult the Web site http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/ltc/general/ltcproj.html.

Another successful program, Project SEED, focuses on grades 4 through 6, engaging students actively in problem solving. Involving students at all ability levels, including students with limited English skills, the program has been implemented in four districts in California—

continued on page 16

Satellite Meetings Provide Forum for New Ideas

The U.S. Department of Education's 1997-98 Satellite Town Meetings feature model programs, best practices and innovative ideas used across the nation to improve schools and communities.

Hosted by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, the sessions air every third Tuesday during the school year.

Upcoming Town Meetings that may be of interest to adult educators include:

- "Supporting Quality Teachers: A Talented Teacher in Every Classroom" November 18, 1997, 8:00-9:00 p.m.*
- "Serving Students with Disabilities: What Families, Schools and Communities Need to Know" January 20, 1998, 8:00-9:00 p.m.*
- "Raising Student Achievement: Schools, Communities and Challenging Standards" February 17, 1998, 8:00-9:00 p.m. *
- "Think College Early: Preparing Academically and Financially" March 17, 1998, 8:00-9:00 p.m.*
- "Making Math Count: World-Class Achievement Starting with Algebra" April 21, 1998, 8:00-9:00 p.m. *

* Eastern time

The Satellite Town Meeting is produced in partnership with the National Alliance of Business and the Center for Workforce Preparation. Many local cable operators also rebroadcast the series.

Additional material is available from the U.S. Department of Education. Call 1-800-USA-LEARN for information on how to participate.

"High Scorer" Award Candidates Must Outperform 85 Percent of Graduating Seniors

Each year, The GED Testing Service joins states, provinces, and territories in recognizing the GED graduate(s) who earn the highest score in their respective jurisdiction. "High scorers" receive plaque for their achievement.

Although some jurisdictions have more stringent requirements, the minimum passing score is 40 on each test and an average standard score of 45. This standard is met by approximately 67 percent of graduating high school seniors. The highest score an examinee can earn on a single test is 80. Thus, the highest possible total standard score is 400.

To be eligible for the "high scorer" award, a GED graduate must obtain a minimum total of 300 standard score points or better on the GED Tests and meet other eligibility criteria.

Approximately 15 percent of graduating high school students achieve total scores of 300 or better; less than two percent earn a total score of 375 or better.

In 1996, two adults earned a score of 390 or above. Micah Tapman, of Blue Hill, ME earned a perfect score 400 and Iliana Diaz of Cincago, IL earned a 396. The highest score reported this year on the Spanish-language GED Tests, 381, was earned by Alberto J. Santaflorentina, of Watertown, MA.

The highest scoring graduate reported for Canada, Randal Ross Howlett, from Vancouver, BC, earned a total standard score of 376.

United States

ALABAMA: Andrew Tyrone Roberts, Alexander City. ARIZONA: James R. Coughenour III, Phoenix (English), Adolpho Rodriguez, Eloy (Spanish). ARKANSAS: Matthew A. Culhane, Eureka Springs. CALIFORNIA: Kevin Jude House, Diamond Bar. CONNECTICUT: Josephine K. Barker, Harwinton. DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Nakeshia K. Banks (English), Thelma B. Pop (Spanish). HAWAII: Kimberly LeilaniSae Moritomo, Kaneohoe. IDAHO: Jessica A. LaPointe, Sandpoint. ILLINOIS: Iliana Diaz, Chicago. IOWA: Brian Zachary Sutter, Cedar Rapids. KANSAS: Lawrence F. Dietze, Lawrence (English), Froylan Martinez, Garden City (Spanish). KENTUCKY: Cassie L. Campbell, Corinth, Alex L. Rasmussen, Murray. MAINE: Micah P. Tapman, Blue Hill. MARYLAND: Jean M. Dick, White Plains. MASSACHUSETTS: Jonathan Anthony Field, Concord, CA (English), Alberto J. Santaflorentina, Watertown (Spanish). MICHIGAN: Tammy Colleen Ma, Sanford. MISSOURI: Christopher T. Hall, Jefferson City. NEBRASKA: Steven A. Simmons, Omaha. NEVADA: Marina Bebic, Las Vegas. NEW HAMPSHIRE: Chad D. Hauver, Rochester. NORTH DAKOTA: Gary S. Bell, New Town. OHIO: Brenon G. Christopher, Republic. OKLAHOMA: Amy Lee Seabold, Chouteau. PENNSYLVANIA: Richard A. Lyon, Herndon. RHODE ISLAND: Theresa Lee Durand, Pawtucket. SOUTH CAROLINA: Sean Thomas Williams, Greenwood. UTAH: Michael C. Smith, West Valley City. VERMONT: Michael A. Theodoron, Brattleboro. VIRGINIA: Osmel O. Garcia, Alexandria. WYOMING: Kyle J. Dietz, Casper.

Canada

BRITISH COLUMBIA: Randal Ross Howlett, Vancouver. NEW BRUNSWICK: Jocelyn Durette, Fredericton (English), Jean Pineault, St-Quentin (French). NEWFOUNDLAND: David W. Penney, Corner Brook. NOVA SCOTIA: Christopher Michael Lee, Lawrencetown. ONTARIO: Susan E. Maguire, Mississauga. PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND: Geraldine Jane Blanchard, Charlottetown. SASKATCHEWAN: Diane Colette Lowey, Saskatoon. YUKON: Brad Cathers, Whitehorse.

Territories

GUAM: Albert M. Mitchell, Jr. PUERTO RICO: Gloria Medina Ortiz, Lajas.

Several jurisdictions have not yet reported their award recipient for 1996 and some jurisdictions do not participate in the program. For information about the selection process for high scorers in your state, province, or territory, please contact your GED Administrator.

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Conference to Explore Advances in Lifelong Learning, Adult Students' Needs

by Richard Kraus

An upcoming national conference on lifelong learning, featuring an address by President Clinton, will focus on the growing importance of adult learners in the nation's higher education system and discuss ways to better meet the needs of adult learners.

"Creating a Nation of Lifelong Learners" will be held at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC, November 16–19.

Conference participants will consider recommendations developed by the Commission for a Nation of Lifelong Learners to promote lifelong learning and explore strategies for implementing the proposals.

The commission, composed of 18 representatives from higher education, business, labor, and government, looked at demographic changes, technology's role in lifelong learning, the imperatives of a global economy, and lifelong learning's role in fostering community, citizenship, and social responsibility.

Members also examined ways that higher education, corporations, unions, government, and philanthropic organizations could better meet the needs of adult learners throughout the U.S. The commission's activities were funded by a 1995 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

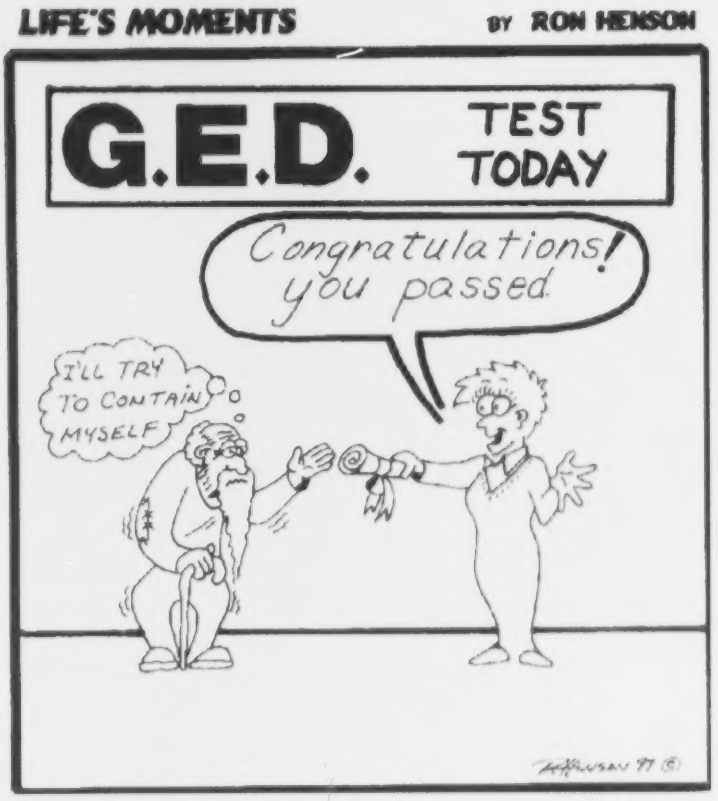
Workshops at the meeting will explore global possibilities for adult learning and work force development; successful strategies for teaching adults; institutional models of excellence in adult lifelong learning; corporate and university collaborations to facilitate lifelong learning; and disseminating college-level curricula via computer, fax, and faculty mentoring systems, among other topics.

In addition to President Clinton's address, conference participants will hear from former Texas Governor Ann Richards, demographer Harold "Bud" Hodgkinson of the Institute for Educational Leadership, and Tony Carnevale of the Educational Testing Service.

The conference is sponsored by 22 organizations, including the AFL-CIO, The Alliance (an association for alternative degree programs for adults), the American Council on Education, the Association for Continuing Higher Education, The College Board, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, and Empire State College and Regents College of the State University of New York.

For more information or to register for "Creating a Nation of Lifelong Learners," call (800) 951-7345.

Richard Kraus is the Outreach Projects Coordinator at the American Council on Education's Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials.



Ron Henson is a recent graduate of the San Diego GED program at West City Center.

MOVING?
Please let us know!

WGBH–Boston's "Diploma Connection" A Community Connection, Too

When they named their project "Diploma Connection," the folks at WGBH-TV in Boston sought to connect their viewers with educational opportunities and create an identity that would bring all their adult education programming under one recognizable umbrella.

Not only did they connect their programs, but they also created a web reaching well beyond the TV station—linking adult learners, cable television stations, adult learning centers, local two- and four-year colleges, the state Department of Education, the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, the Boston Community Center, and, most recently, sister station WGBY in Springfield, MA.

WGBH's pilot project, launched in 1994, created a collaboration through which two area cable television operators began airing the ***KET/GED Series*** (also known as GED on TV), along with several telecourses for college credit. Over the next two years, WGBH added KET's pre-GED reading and math series, ***Another Page*** and ***Math Basics***.

In February 1997, WGBH began broadcasting the KET-produced programs directly to viewers in eastern Massachusetts, in addition to continuing the cablecasts. Today, WGBH broadcasts one episode each of the three KET programs twice a week on its broadcast channel and three times a week on cable. Under the Diploma Connection umbrella, which includes KET programs and PBS telecourses, WGBH either broadcasts or cablecasts a total of 28 hours of adult education programming a week.

"We added broadcast to increase our reach," explains WGBH Diploma Connection Director Margaret Yamamoto. "Instead of serving only four communities with our cablecast, we are reaching all the communities in more than half the state."

The station is also continuing to expand telecourses and currently offers 12 college-level courses per semester through 11 participating colleges. "This fall we'll kick off a distance learning degree program with four of our colleges," says Yamamoto. "Each college will develop its core curriculum from the courses we air and from courses available from other distance learning options. This format gives colleges the freedom to shape their own degree programs."

Along with broadcasting the programs and feeding the signal to local cable companies, WGBH provides a bit of outreach, referring students to learning centers, libraries, and other community agencies that might work with potential students.

"WGBH doesn't have the personnel to do much outreach, so we work closely with adult education centers," Yamamoto explains. "The Department of Education has been involved since we began delivering adult education programs."

Yamamoto says she has seen interest in the Diploma Connection increase since the station began preceding each adult education program with an identifying spot. The 30-second animation shows a diploma unfurling and invites viewers to call the station for more information. Calls this February nearly tripled compared with the same period last year, but no one knows how many students are actually using the programs to study for the GED Tests.

> *"Adult education centers and school districts are working with their local cable operators to tape our broadcasts, then cablecast our...programs at times more convenient to their students."*
>
> *—Margaret Yamamoto*
> *WGBH–TV*

To help WGBH get a better idea of the actual numbers, GED testing centers in the region have revised the questionnaire they pass out after the exam so that students can check "GED ON TV" as one of the ways they prepared for the tests.

Yamamoto also has been working with representatives of the

continued on page 16

Conference, from page 1

Ghislaine [illegible], [illegible], Ontario, gets acquainted with GEDTS staff and other program officials at the New GED Administrators' luncheon meeting.

implemented until the next generation of tests goes into circulation, the topics covered in the sessions do mirror changes in the newly released 1997 GED Examiners Manual. One such development is a requirement that all newly-appointed Chief and Alternate Chief Examiners must undergo inservice training and serve under an experienced Examiner for two full test administrations before giving the tests on their own.

Special Testing for Adults with Specific Learning Disabilities

As a follow-up to last year's engaging session on specific learning disabilities, this year's session covered some more specific issues for the GED Administrators, many of whom are already charged with approving or disapproving all but the most complicated requests.

Biram Stege, Chief Examiner for the Marshall Islands, explains how her program serves diverse groups in remote, scattered island communities.

Facilitator Kathleen Ross-Kidder, Ph.D., GEDTS' consulting psychologist, focused on established methods for documenting a learning disability, and how to complete and evaluate the revised special accommodations form. She also screened a "rough cut" of GEDTS' new instructional video on this topic, which will be distributed near the New Year. A training and certification workshop is also in the works.

With the release of the 1997 manual, new request forms for accommodations are now in circulation. The soon-to-be-released video reviews for Examiners and Administrators how the form must be completed and explains the revised policies in the Examiner's Manual (Section 7) that cover such testing accommodations.

Dr. Kidder also reviewed concerns about the forms which slow down the approval of requests. Many requests arrive at GEDTS with either all available accommodations requested, or with none of the options checked off. Because the person who has evaluated the candidate is in the best position to determine what accommodation(s) should be used, she explained, "he or she should check only those that will help the examinee. Some accommodations may actually hamper the examinee's performance." She reminded attendees that the candidate, the Examiner, and the GED Administrator must all sign the form.

Paula Hill-Reid, GED Administrator for Indiana (center), gets a warm welcome from GED Test Specialists Kate Woodward (left) and Joyce Downey Hoover during the first full day of meetings.

Specifications for and Construction of GED 2000

Core members of GEDTS' Test Development Unit—Director Joan Auchter and Test Specialists Joyce Downey Hoover (Social Studies), Kate Woodward (Interpreting Literature and the Arts and special editions), and Art Halbrook (Writing Skills)—were joined by mathematics consultant and former GED test editor Myrna Manly to discuss options for the new generation of tests, which are due for release in 2001.

"Our primary focus," explained Auchter, "is to ensure that, whatever changes we make to the structure of the tests or their delivery, the tests reflect the educational curriculum and performance standards that states and provinces are adopting for the next century while retaining their quality, viability, and durability."

After conducting extensive research into content area and state

"This was one of the most interesting, informative, and yet challenging conferences held."

—Emma Rhodes, Arkansas

level standards initiatives, as well as a survey of high school practitioners, the GED Testing Service hosted a "GED 2000" test specifications meeting in January, 1997. The 28-member Test Specifications Committee of international experts drafted a report under review by the GED Advisory Committee.

Several options are under consideration, including a plan to model current education practice by combining the Writing Skills Test and the Interpreting Literature and the Arts Test into a single test, to create an interdisciplinary test to assess information processing skills and academic skills across content areas, to use such authentic stimulus materials as intact newspaper articles.

ACE President Stanley O. Ikenberry, who addressed the GED Administrators in a general session, answers questions from the audience.

Also under development are new specifications for stimulus materials and "constructed response" items that can be objectively scored, even if the candidate is not selecting from among five possibilities. Calculators will be allowed for 80 percent of the Mathematics Test, leaving the remaining 20 percent "no-calculator zone" to meet current standards that emphasize estimation and mental math as critical skills for the productive citizen.

GED Administrators Jacqueline Brown Baxter (MD), Frank Shea (MA), and Elvin Long (MO) and Chief Examiners Marge Mastie (MI) and Ruth Derfler (MA) in a general session.

In addition to the scores reported for the five proposed content areas: English Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, and Interdisciplinary, the new generation of tests may also report out scores in specific skill areas such as communication and research.

Other sessions explored the connection between GED, workforce education and the National Skills Standards Board, and recruitment of jurisdictions to submit, on a pilot basis, gender, race and ethnicity data for next year's annual statistical report. The four-day meeting included an animated conversation with American Council on Education (ACE) President Stanley O. Ikenberry, who took over the leadership of ACE in November, 1996. His presence marked only the second time an ACE President has joined the GED meeting.

Ikenberry focused on the increasingly high premium placed on postsecondary education and the challenges that traditional and non-traditional programs face in building a more seamless, integrated educational system that better serves citizens. "The GED is a bridge," said Ikenberry, "that links individuals from where they find themselves...to further education, and jobs, and self-sufficiency." He added, "I am committed to strengthening the GED Testing Service and to making the GED the most modern, up-to-date, and secure high school equivalency tests possible."

"I left with a very positive feeling," wrote Vicky F. Ramakka, GED Administrator for Nevada, in a follow-up letter to the GED staff, "that the GED testing program is in good hands and is facing toward the future."

GEDTS Senior Research Associate Sen Qi, a native of China, experiences his first Texas-style barbeque after a long day of meetings.

Turner Award Recipient, Outstanding Texans, Accept Honors in San Antonio

A Maryland grandmother and five young Texans received awards as outstanding GED graduates at the annual conference of GED Administrators in San Antonio.

Sonya Carson, a Baltimore native with little education who raised two sons by herself in desperate poverty, received the 1997 Cornelius P. Turner award during an evening ceremony. Ms. Carson earned her GED diploma soon after her children won scholarships to Yale and the University of Michigan. Today, one son is a world-renowned surgeon, the other a successful engineer.

Sonya Carson proudly displays her Turner Award plaque.

Named for the founder of the GED testing program, the Turner Award is the GED Testing Service's (GEDTS) highest honor.

"Every Mom knows that a child doesn't hear too much of what she says," explains Carson, a grandmother of five. "But living what you say—that's what really gets through to kids. I always stressed the value of education to my sons, but I needed to practice what I preached. That's why I went back for my GED."

Profiled by *Parade* magazine in May, 1997, Carson also figures prominently in a long-running Baltimore play that depicts how her younger son achieves success despite the obstacles in his way.

In addition, Carson counsels young women who are confronting the same obstacles the Carson family faced.

On hand to accept achievement awards from the Texas Education Agency and GEDTS were, left to right: Esmeralda Del Toro (Schertz-Cibolor Independent School District), Rosalie Gomez (Northside I.S.D.) Katherine Kirkhofer (North East I.S.D.), Julie Requenez (Northside I.S.D.) and Jeff Petrie (San Antonio I.S.D.)

Also honored at the meeting were five GED graduates from the San Antonio area: Katherine Kirkhofer, who graduated from Southwest Texas State University, is now a dietician at a regional grocery chain; Esmeralda Del Toro, who earned her GED diploma nearly 30 years after leaving school, plans to continue her modeling career while working toward a degree in fashion marketing at St. Philip's College (TX); Rosalie Gomez, who is beginning work toward an accounting degree at San Antonio College, gave birth to her first child two days before the ceremony; Jeff Petrie, whose GED diploma, along with the support of his wife and family, enabled him to qualify for a management position for a major paint store chain; and Julie Requenez, who is earning excellent grades in her work toward certification as an electronic technician at San Antonio College.

Diana Estill, a freelance writer and U.S. delegate to the UNESCO World Conference on Adult Literacy (see May/June 1997 *GED Items*, page 2) served as Mistress of Ceremonies for the event.

As they accepted their awards from Cathy Erwin of the Texas Education Agency, the local graduates each spent a few minutes recounting their personal stories for the guests gathered to honor them.

The audience was reminded that adult education classes often impart more than academic skills. "The perceptive instructional staff," remarked Katherine Kirkhofer, "gave me the confidence to overcome the deep seated fears than an uneducated adult carries with them."

Joined by their family members, and a few classmates, the honorees inspired a renewed appreciation for the program, not only from the teachers and counselors who work so hard at the local level, but also for those at the jurisdiction and national level whose contact with GED graduates is sometimes limited.

Each graduate will receive a $500.00 tuition benefit at the institution of their choice.

Fresh Faces in Many Places! New GED Administrators Take the Reins

Pat Bragg is the new Administrator for Yukon, replacing Ardys Smith. O.J. Webster has retired in Alabama, and taking his place is former GED Administrator Joe Macaluso. The new GED Administrator for Alaska is Marsha Partlow. Welcome also to Vicky Bauer in Nebraska, and Terry Banfield in Alberta. Carl Paternostro has replaced Janet Snow as the Administrator for Connecticut and Carl Miller is now running the show in Florida. In the Marshall Islands, Alfred Cappelle has also recently taken over as GED Administrator. In Hawaii we welcome Francine Grudzias, in Louisiana, Donna Nola-Caney; in Indiana, Paula Hill-Reid; in Mississippi, Eloise Richardson; and in Michigan, Jim Folkening.

"One-Woman Show" in Montana Dies

Long-time GED Administrator for Montana, Karen Sullivan, died suddenly of a heart attack on Sunday, June 22, 1997. Karen was also the state's Director of Adult Education. She is survived by her husband, Dan. The state has recently appointed David Huff to fill both positions left vacant by Karen's death.

Miss America Tapes Free to "Early Birds"

As Miss America, Tara Holland focused the nation's attention onto the issue of literacy. During her reign, she also found time to raise awareness about the GED Tests by recording a public service announcement (PSA) for the GED Testing Service.

As Tara Holland's reign draws to a close, GEDTS has a limited quantity of these popular PSA tapes still available. The tapes are now free on a first-come, first-served basis to those who call the GED Fulfillment House at (301) 604-9073.

GED Testing Service "Hits the Road"

Look for GED Testing Service staff at the following upcoming meetings:

October 7–8, Arizona GED Examiner's Meeting; October 15–18, One-Third of a Nation IV in Miami, FL; October 28–31, Wisconsin GED Conference; October 29–November 1, Literary Volunteers of America, Charlotte, NC; November 7–8, Symposium on Adult Learners With Cognitive Impairments, Lisle, IL; November 8–12 AAACE, Cincinnati, OH; November 16–19 Creating a Nation of Lifelong Learners, Washington, DC.

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www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/express.html

NCLD Moves Headquarters

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) has relocated its offices to: 381 Park Avenue South, Suite 1401, New York, NY, 10016. Phone: (212) 545-7510 Fax: (212) 545-9665. Toll-free Information and Referral: (888) 575-7373.

Items Wins Production, Writing Awards

GED Items is pleased to announce that the newsletter has earned two Awards of Excellence in the APEX '97 competition. Competition judges honored Editor Lisa Richards Hone in two categories: One Person-Produced Newsletters and Training, Education & Information Writing.

GED Testing Service Director Joan E. Auchter says "This is an overdue honor for Lisa. ***Items*** is polished and well-written, most people don't realize that she writes, edits, and designs each issue from start to finish. We're proud of her work."

Technology Survey Nears Completion

The GED Testing Service is exploring the idea of offering publications such as the Examiner's Manual and the Annual Statistical Report in alternative formats such as CD-ROM and the Internet.

To find out how useful these formats would be to GED Examiners, GED Administrators, and program staff members, GEDTS contracted with a company to survey every GED Administrator and GED Testing Center in the U.S. and Canada.

Approximately two-thirds of the 3,200 centers have responded and GEDTS soon will begin analysis of the data. Watch future issues of *GED Items* for the findings!

Science & Math, from page 8

Alameda, Berkeley, Oakland, and West Contra Costa—as well as in Indianapolis, Indiana; Dallas, Texas; Detroit, Michigan; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Camden, New Jersey. For more information on Project SEED, call (510) 644-3422.

The U.S. Department of Education's Eisenhower National Clearinghouse has an extensive catalogue of materials to support math achievement. For more information, call 1-800-621-5785 or access the Web site at http://www.enc.org.

*This article first appeared in the U.S. Department of Education publication, **Community Update** (Number 49, page 6). To subscribe or view the publication online, point to http://www.ed.gov/G2K/community.*

WGBH, from page 11

Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency and the Boston Community Center to formulate plans for a program to reach residents of mixed-income housing developments. Sylvette Betancourt, youth program specialist for the housing agency, hopes to find and train tutors to work with residents as they study using Diploma Connection programming. A pilot project was planned for summer, 1997.

In February, 1997, WGBH began helping to deliver adult education programs to adult learners in the western part of Massachusetts, feeding the ***KET/GED Series*** to sister station WGBY in Springfield, MA. Jennifer Yuan, teacher media service coordinator for WGBY, says the response so far has been positive. She plans to do a follow-up assessment when the first run ends in early July.

"The professional response to our Diploma Connection broadcast has been outstanding," says Yamamoto. "Adult education centers and school districts are working with their local cable operators to tape our broadcasts, then cablecast our GED and adult basic education programs at times more convenient to their students. We are getting calls from prisons, centers for the mentally ill, and all manner of service providers looking for ways to utilize our programming."

She adds, "The programming provided by KET is an integral part of the Diploma Connection and is helping to position WGBH as a major provider of adult education programming and professional development services in Massachusetts."

*This article first appeared in the Spring, 1997, issue of **KET Adult Learning Quarterly**. For more information, contact KET, (800) 354-9067.*

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VOLUME 14, NUMBER 6 AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER 1997

Innovative Process Matches Spanish-language Tests to U.S. English Standard

Is it fair to remove the barrier of language and allow test participants to demonstrate knowledge of a subject in their preferred language? Many experts agree that such an accommodation might be fair—as long as the versions remain truly comparable.

But when the situation involves a nationwide test, one universally respected because of its high standards, one on whose results individuals' educational and professional futures may depend, how can that challenge of guaranteeing comparability be met?

This was the issue facing the GED Testing Service four years ago.

The answer was a project involving linguists and other test development experts, working on the design and field testing of a Spanish translation of the U.S. English-language GED Tests. The goal was to create an equally valid instrument which could serve Spanish speakers without diluting the validity and meaning of test scores.

The current Spanish-language test, developed for and normed in Puerto Rico, is based on the work expected of high school graduates there. However, of the 41,000 students who took the Spanish-language GED Tests last year, nearly two-thirds of them took the tests in the U.S. proper. The figures underscore the fact that people of Hispanic origin in the continental U.S. now comprise more than ten percent of the population. The new tests are designed to reflect the same standards as the English-language test developed for and normed in the continental United States.

"For the Social Studies, Science, Interpreting Literature and the Arts, and Math Tests, direct translation works," says Joan Auchter, Director of the GED Testing Service, "because the process is really testing the candidate's skill in the content area."

But for the multiple-choice portion (Part I) of Test 1, the Writing Skills Test, experts couldn't simply "go Berlitz" with a straight translation, because the content area is language, and the elements of language differ.

For example, possessives and sound-alikes, common in English, don't exist in Spanish, and Spanish uses diacritical markings that don't appear in English. Furthermore, multiple-choice options must seem plausible for a test to be valid.

When some of the English-language options are translated directly into Spanish, they make no sense. The candidate can immediately eliminate the implausible choice and the capacity for that item to test real knowledge is impaired.

Another issue concerns regional colloquialisms within Spanish. Just as some English speakers use the word "lorry" and others say "truck," Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans all have different words for "car." One might say *coche*; another, *carro*, a third, *máquina*. In a testing context, however, the same word, *automóvil*, must serve all.

To ensure the same level of difficulty in the translated test, some questions must therefore be differ-

continued on page 6

Inside *Items*

"Dear GED" 4

For GED Examiners 5

From the Director 2

GED Graduate Story 3

Legislative Update 7

News and Notes 11

Viewpoint 8

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Neighborhood Services JOIN Over Welfare Reform

by Joan Auchter

Welfare reform is on everyone's radar screen. Across the United States, we face a momentous change: moving people from the welfare rolls to the workplace. In some regions, the jobs are available; in others, they're not. In some instances people are narrowly trained for very specific, short-lived jobs. In others, the obstacles to keeping a job can overwhelm a person's best efforts.

Studies show that just having a job is not enough. To remain employed and self-sufficient over the long term, to participate in civic life, to parent healthy, educated children, individuals need more than just a job. The challenge in moving a large segment of our population from dependency to self-sufficiency is multi-faceted. At its core is this: we must empower each individual with the skills and knowledge they need to adapt to changes in the workplace and to make informed choices over their lifetimes.

In Philadelphia, there is an initiative under way that builds GED preparation into welfare reform. JOIN (Jobs and Opportunity to Improve Neighborhoods) is a city-wide coalition built to address the many challenges related to welfare reform. While interest rates and unemployment rates remain low on a national scope, fueling economic optimism in many areas, prospects in many urban centers are not so rosy. In mid-November, big-city mayors meeting in Washington warned that there are not enough entry level jobs opening in America's cities to accommodate the number of recipients who will have to enter the workforce by 2001. According to the coalition's Ed Schwartz, of the Institute for the Study of Civic Values, "We're heading for a social catastrophe that will make current levels of homelessness seem benign by comparison."

To address this impending welfare reform fallout, the Institute pulled together a city-wide movement of Philadelphia's neighborhood-based organizations, human service agencies, and advocacy groups to develop a public agenda. The coalition is breaking new ground, expanding the focus of community groups from concerns such as housing and crime toward the issues of jobs, public transportation, adult education and literacy, and child care.

Beginning in September the coalition sponsored neighborhood roundtables and city-wide meetings for civic groups, literacy providers, and child care centers. As a result, more than 30 Philadelphia area groups developed and agreed on an agenda with which to lobby state and city officials. A town meeting around the JOIN agenda is set for Monday, December 8 (see page 10 for text of the agenda, with its reference to the importance of GED programs).

Volunteers and agency representatives who work closely with those who will be personally affected by the welfare-to-work initiative are in a unique position to understand its impact and to advocate for the systemic changes that will make the initiative a success. This exciting activity in the City of Brotherly Love demonstrates that diverse groups can together develop a common vision and work toward materializing that vision. By collaborating, they have created an impact none could have achieved single-handedly. They also have expanded their resources, all with negligible cost. The JOIN agenda may not survive the political process intact, but it provides a unified, tangible starting point that is immensely valuable.

Let us join them in meeting head-on the challenge to build the infrastructure that welfare reform needs to successfully move people to the workplace with a full toolkit—the knowledge and skills they need to be capable, adaptable, employable, and promotable members of society.

Joan E. Auchter is the Director of the GED Testing Service and directs the Test Development Unit. If you have information to share about similar coalitions, please contact us.

WINNER
APEX '97
AWARDS FOR PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE

GED Items (ISSN 0896-0518) is published bimonthly by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education (ACE). *GED Items* is not copyrighted. Readers are invited to copy any articles not previously copyrighted. Credit should be given in accordance with accepted publishing standards.

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GED Diploma Provides Stepping Stone for Psychology Technician

by Shu-Lin LaCroix

I grew up in Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China, where I graduated from Ching Hsin Senior High School in 1971. In 1972, I met an American soldier named Doug LaCroix, who eventually went home to the United States. We were able to keep in touch with each other through letters. I came to the United States to marry Doug. Five years later, I had my daughter, Jennifer, and three years after that my son, Daniel, was born. We all still live in Doug's hometown, Laurel, Mississippi.

When Jennifer was nine years old, she came home from school with homework. She asked me to help her with it, but I couldn't really provide what she needed. Right then, I decided to go back to school. A friend of mine told me about that there were back-to-school programs at Jones County Junior College (JCJC).

Even though I wasn't a single parent, you could say I was "displaced," having come from another country.

When I arrived at JCJC, the coordinator, Ms. Anne Forde, treated me just as if I were her own daughter. She was very kind and helpful; she really understood how difficult it was for me to start a new life in a new country.

Ms. Forde guided me through the steps as I discovered that the college could not accept my Chinese high school diploma and helped me to enroll in the Single Parent Displaced Homemaker Program at JCJC.

Shu-Lin LaCroix enjoys caring for the family horses near their home in Laurel, Mississippi.

I suppose that even though I wasn't a single parent, you could say I was "displaced," having come from another country. After I studied the GED material for two months, I was able to start classes at JCJC because of my GED and ACT scores.

I decided that I wanted to be an elementary teacher and began taking courses in 1988. A year later I graduated from JCJC *cum laude*. In 1990, I continued my studies at William Carey College, where I later decided to change my major to Psychology. Finally, I transferred to the University of Southern Mississippi, which offers all the courses I needed to become a psychologist. I graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi with a Bachelor of Science *summa cum laude*. It took me a while to find a job as a psychologist, however.

Although I applied right away for a position at the nearby Ellisville State School for the Mentally Disabled, I wasn't able to get the job until 1993. I have been employed at the school as a Psychology Technician for a year and a half now. I really enjoy my job working with patients who have mental retardation.

In my spare time, I enjoy reading, cooking, and looking after our horses. I also teach a Sunday school class at our church.

I owe my success to all the support I received from Ms. Forde and my family. I hope that I'm able to keep my career going and that my story will encourage someone to go through college and choose a career best suited for them.

Many thanks to Anne Forde at Jones County Community College for putting us in touch with Shu-Lin.

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Letters Tell Many Stories

Have you ever wondered what kind of mail we receive at One Dupont Circle? Some of it is routine, some of it is funny. Some letters are simply nice to read. Here's a sampling of our recent favorites:

"The Many Faces of GED" [event] was a night to remember for myself, my husband David, and for all the honorees. It is programs like this that gives the people the extra boost in life to help them help themselves. I was surprised and delighted to receive the five hundred dollars. I plan to use the money to buy books and software to support my data base in my new profession as a Nutritionist.

If there is ever anything that I can do to support this organization please do not hesitate to call on me. I do not believe that I would be the person that I am today if this program was not in place when I needed it. GED does make a difference!

Katherine Kirkhofer

Katherine Kirkhofer left school in seventh grade. After earning her GED diploma, she completed a degree at Southwest Texas State University and now works in quality assurance, ingredients, and nutrition at a regional grocery chain.

Yo estoy esribiendo este articulo, para darles a conocer a los lectores, sobre como una persona se siento cuando se dá cuenta de que si puede superarse.

Cuando yo era niña le pedia a mis padres que me dejaran ir a la escuela. Pero, me padre no creia en esa teoria. Para el una niña sólamente debia aprender a limpiar la casa y a cuidar niños. Asi que no me dejaron ir a la escuela y ésto fué muy triste para mi. Mas tarde me casé y mi esposo me prohibió ir a estudiar, el decia que yo estaba muy grande de edad.

Hasta que un diá me dije voy a estudiar y primero Dios con empeño comprobé mi capacidad para aprender. Hoy a la edad de 51 años estoy estudiando en la Universidad de Houston en el programa H.E.P., para obtener mi diploma de GED. Me siento muy orgullosa de mi, y les digo a todos nunca es tarde para aprender. Y si yo puedo a mi edad, tu puedes tambien. Estoy segura que lograré me meta, pero, además conocí muchos amigos que me ayudaron y enseñaron cosas muy buenas.

¡Estudien, yo sé lo que les digo!

Francisca Martinez

I'm writing this article to let readers know how a person feels when they find out for the first time how much progress they can make.

When I was a little girl, my parents did not believe in education for girls. According to my father, I was supposed to learn how to clean a house and take care of babies. Later on, I got married and my husband did not let me go to school either. He said I was too old to study.

However, in spite of these drawbacks, I decided that I wanted to learn, and thank God I am going to school now. I had never been to school before in my whole life, not even first grade. I did my best to learn as fast as I could and surprised myself when I found out the capacity for learning that I had. At age fifty-one, I took my GED exam. At this moment, I not only have my GED, but I also found a lot of friends who teach me good things. So please go to school, If I can pass without former schooling, you can too!

Francisca Martinez is a graduate of Houston Community College's High School Equivalency Program. She enrolled at the college this fall for English classes and plans to continue her studies in business administration.

I would first like to say that I thought your web page was very informative! It really gave me a lot insight as to what the GED program is all about. You did a great job! :-) [e-mail "smiley face"]

I first decided to attend a GED program after I had left school for quite some time, and I began to realise that the GED program would be my best option. I was in a very difficult place. I did not have enough credits to enter 11th grade due to me leaving so early, and I desperately wanted to attend college in the future. As soon as I became aware that you could enter college by achieving a certain level on the GED exams I was extremely happy, and felt that I would be able to pursue the goals I had for myself that I would not be able to achieve without first attending college.

I am writing you because I have two questions concerning the test score on the GED exams.

I was recently given a practice GED exam. I was not tested in Math or Writing because I believe

continued on page 12

New Manual Offers More Information, Better Organization, Updated Resources

"Times have changed," goes the old saying. It's one that is certainly true for the* GED Examiner's Manual. *In 1954, the Examiner's Manual was a 20-page booklet; a separate, 80-page booklet containing state, provincial, and territorial policies came out in 1966.

Unfortunately, neither publication provided much guidance to local program operators until they were combined and revamped in the 1980s.

Today's manual holds more than 500 pages of specific information about every aspect of the tests—program history, test construction, test storage and administration, even instructions for locating a veteran's old test scores. This degree of detail serves to make the GED testing experience as uniform as possible for test-takers wherever they register.

By now, each GED Testing Center should have received a new *1997 GED Examiner's Manual*, addressed to the Chief Examiner of record. Users will find topics easier than ever to find with an index, located between the text and the appendix, that is more extensive than ever before.

While it may not be the first feature that Examiners will notice, nearly all the forms commonly used to correspond with the GED Administrator and the GED Testing Service (GEDTS) have been revised. Incorporating a systematic formatting that better accommodates typewriting or handwriting, most of the forms also include new requirements and procedures that come into effect with the distribution of this manual. For this reason, after December 15, 1997, any request (a transportation addendum, for example) made on an outdated form will not be approved.

Users will find that the manual's appendix, which contains nearly all the materials needed to operate a local testing program, has been reorganized into nine separate appendices, grouped by function. For example, Appendix A contains a publications list and other general program information, while all materials relating to test accommodations for candidates with disabilities (Section 7) can now be found in Appendix E.

Several sections have been extensively revised and deserve immediate attention from GED Examiners and other testing program staff. See especially Sections 4.2 and 4.3, Sections 5.3 and 5.4,

continued on page 10

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Viewpoint

One Special Day Can Serve Many

by A. Progam Director

One very positive way of keeping one of our very important publics—the U.S. Congress—involved in the activities and value of GED testing is to invite one's U.S. district representative to experience a GED graduation ceremony. Each spring, I am invited to speak at several such events. Speaking may be nothing more than a minute's worth of greetings and congratulations on behalf of my state's department of education. Or I may give a brief address related to the significance of attaining a high school equivalency diploma. One ceremony each spring, however, is unique: the one where I get to present the state valedictorian's plaque.

I suggest, however, that a state employee be the "last resort" for this important honor. Rather, upon identifying the valedictorian, the GED Administrator should immediately inform the testing center and adult ed program in the school district where the valedictorian resides.

If a graduation ceremony is planned and if the valedictorian agrees to participate, the GED Administrator and local program leadership should invite the district's U.S. Representative to present the plaque. The more "lead time" the congressperson has, the better the chances that he or she will attend.

On the day of the ceremony, the GED Administrator should greet the representative, give him or her the plaque and suggest a solid one-liner to go with the presentation. For example, while most high school valedictorians are first in a class of a few hundred, this valedictorian was first among a "class" of [number] thousands who took the GED in [jurisdiction] in [year]. It's an attention-getting statement; the congressperson appreciates having appropriate background (and looks good saying it) and everyone is impressed. A single sheet of such information can be prepared in advance for the congressperson's staff, so that the congressperson can review it prior to the event.

While there can be only one valedictorian each year in the state, many GED graduation ceremonies are held locally. There may be a special graduate whom the congressperson can recognize—one with newly-attained citizenship, an octogenarian, mother-daughter credential recipients, someone who has overcome a handicapping condition or other odds. The congressperson may be asked to give remarks which honor the entire group. The ceremony that provides graduates an opportunity to be important also affords the representative a closer look at his or her constituency.

While he or she may not always accept the invitation, simply extending an offer meets two important objectives. First, it increases the congressperson's awareness of the GED program and, second, the act conveys courtesy and respect for the representative's role in society. The adult education community has a compelling need to remain in touch with Congress. Much time and energy are spent with our collective hands out. Participating in a GED graduation ceremony offers an opportunity for members of Congress to witness firsthand the fruits of their legislative efforts.

The author of this article asked that their name not be revealed.

Translation, from page 1

ent, but still demand an equal level of ability.

After an intensive and extensive translation process, experts produced a Writing Skills Test that represents 60% straight translation and 40% elements that are equally difficult, but not exact "duplicates." Says Auchter: "If a person has the ability to read and write the Spanish language well, it's projected that she has the ability, with training, to express herself in English with equal competence."

For...the Writing Skills Test, experts couldn't simply "go Berlitz" with a straight translation, because the content area is language, and the elements of language differ.

To "test the test," a small sample of biliterate U.S. students were give half of the Interpreting Literature and the Arts tests in English and half in Spanish as a screening device. Those biliterate students who performed equally well on both halves of the test will help make sure that any difficulty with test items does not result from translation.

This spring, the test will be given again at high schools in New York, California, Florida, Texas, and Chicago to further assure that translation has not introduced new problems.

"Our goal was to preserve access without changing the standards," Auchter notes. "We can remove a barrier, but we can't change the standard. The new Spanish tests will meet those requirements without discriminating."

It has been a long and complex process, but a successful one, reflecting activities on the cutting edge of translation. The new Spanish-language tests will be ready by the fall of 1998 to fill 1999 contract orders.

Literacy, Adult Ed Funding To Rise

Calling this "the best year for American education in more than a generation," President Clinton on November 13 signed into law the 1998 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill, which substantially increases literacy funding for next year.

The largest increase, $22 million, went to the Even Start family literacy program. Adult education basic state grants received an additional $5 million, bringing that program's total funding to $345 million for fiscal 1998. Local programs can apply for these funds through their state education agencies beginning in July, 1998.

Eighty-five million in preliminary funding for a children's literacy initiative was allocated to several existing programs including AmeriCorps/VISTA ($24 million), the Foster Grandparent program ($9.8 million), the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program ($4.6 million), the Eisenhower Professional Development program ($25 million), the Fund for the Improvement of Education ($5 million), and $16 M of the $22 M increase for Even Start. The VA-HUD appropriations bill also included $25 million for children's literacy.

The House and Senate also agreed to a $210 million "advance appropriation" for fiscal 1999 for the children's literacy initiative if it is enacted by July 1, 1998. Otherwise this $210 million will be spent on special education rather than literacy.

The House of Representatives on November 8 passed its children's literacy initiative, the Reading Excellence Act (H.R. 2614). The bill focuses on professional development for classroom reading teachers.

If enacted, the bill would also supplement family literacy programs by funding training for parents who need improved skills to help children with homework and to be their children's first and most important teachers. H.R. 2614 also broadens the literacy component of the federal College Work Study program. The Senate plans to take up similar legislation next year.

Information for this article courtesy of the National Institute for Literacy, (202) 632-1500, http://www.nifl.gov. Additional data was supplied by Diane Hampton, a legislative analyst with the American Council on Education's Department of Governmental Relations.

Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations for Fiscal 1998

(in millions of dollars)	President	House	Senate	Final
Adult Education State Grants	382	340	340	345
Even Start Family Literacy	108	108	108	124
National Eval./Technical Assistance	6	5	5	5
National Institute for Literacy	6	4.5	5.5	5.5
Prison Literacy	0	0	4.7	4.7
Children's Literacy/America Reads	260	0	0	85*

* *Since the legislation has not yet been enacted, this preliminary funding was added to existing programs.*

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— Suzanne DuPlantier, Adult Ed Specialist, Baton Rouge, LA

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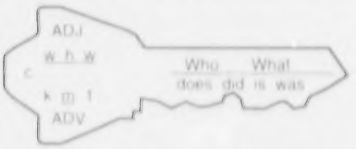

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"Multiplicity" Approach Helps Instructor Individualize Lessons for Adult Students

Many busy adult education teachers report that they find themselves stretched to the limit. "I finally found a way to clone myself," chuckles Janet Scarpone, an award-winning educator with 22 years of experience teaching adults at the college and high school level.

The energetic instructor designed two videotape-based systems especially for those who need a quick but thorough review in mathematics and essay writing. Although they are intended to lend an extra hand in the classroom, the tapes can also benefit parents with school-aged children as well as young adults studying for college entrance and placement exams.

Janet Scarpone struggled for years to meet the varied needs of her students—those planning to take the GED Tests, as well as others preparing for civil service exams, teacher certification tests, or the ASVAB military placement examination. As she started looking for videotapes in the late 1980s, she says, "I found few commercial videos that 'hit the spot' because the lessons were usually designed for schoolchildren. Finally, I decided to make my own."

"Because of the open enrollment system in the school where I teach, new students join the class at random, often arriving in the middle of something. Now I can shake their hands and hand them a video which includes everything I've always wanted to tell each new student, but rarely have time to say."

Selecting different tapes based on each student's needs, Scarpone customizes tasks for individuals or small groups, giving each person exactly the material he or she needs at each step along his or her learning continuum.

By condensing all her best math and writing lectures into brief, to-the-point, easy-to-understand lessons, and then adding guest segments and critiques of actual work, Scarpone says that she's expanded the normal classroom experience—and made sure that, no matter how many times she teaches the same lesson, she never forgets an important point.

Students can watch a particular video as often as they wish, complete the worksheets and post-tests, and ask questions when they get stuck. Instead of teaching one lesson that bores some and confuses others, Scarpone "makes the rounds" while students work at a comfortable pace and take responsibility for their own learning. "It's so exciting," she declares, "to see a student's self-esteem improve as they catch on to concepts that escaped them before."

Using tapes allows Scarpone to run six or more math groups a day using two VCRs and television monitors. Students who have conflicting work or family obligations are better able to keep up with their studies. Scarpone also finds that students are less likely to give up out of frustration when they control the pace of the lesson, rewinding where needed and skipping the parts they've already mastered.

After deciding that her "home grown" videotapes had a market outside her own classroom, Scarpone invested in having the tapes and accompanying workbooks professionally produced.

As the popularity of the videos have increased, she's added a toll free order line, a new mailing address, and a website—and stopped filling orders in her spare time at home. Her market is expanding, she says, to include other groups, such as middle school teachers and home schoolers.

Now the successful teacher is also succeeding at business—one that has its roots in her own expertise.

Janet Scarpone's students view a videotaped lesson during an open classroom session.

Janet Scarpone teaches at the National City Adult School in National City, CA. She is the winner of the 1997 Calco Award for Excellence in Teaching from the California Council on Adult Education and was honored in August for her work by the Board of Trustees of the Sweetwater Union High School District.

Sylvan Learning Systems Goes to Bat; Will Deliver International Testing for GEDTS

Washington, DC

Sylvan Learning Systems on November 5 signed an agreement with the American Council on Education's General Educational Development Testing Service (GEDTS) to deliver a computerized version of the GED Tests overseas through Sylvan's extensive network of computer-based testing centers.

> *"It's been our goal...to improve delivery of the GED Tests to students overseas, but it has been tremendously challenging to administer the program securely."*
>
> *—Joan Auchter*
> *Director, GEDTS*

The tests will be available only at Sylvan's testing sites outside the United States, Canada, and their territories. Overseas sites sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense and DANTES (Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support) will likewise be unhampered by the new service.

Foreign and United States citizens abroad who did not graduate from a U.S. high school will now have the opportunity to earn a high school credential by passing the GED Tests. The lack of such a credential is an obstacle for many who are otherwise qualified to attend universities in the states.

Under policies established by the Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials, foreign nationals are eligible to test stateside as long as they meet the other requirements established by the jurisdiction in which they reside.

Currently, the tests are offered abroad to U.S. citizens only through a handful of secure U.S. embassies and U.S. Information Service field offices which have agreed to provide the service.

U.S. civilians and military dependents overseas may also take the tests at military installations operating DANTES (Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support) testing center. However, priority is given to active duty servicemembers who request an opportunity to take the GED Tests.

"It's been our goal for many years," said GED Testing Service Director Joan Auchter, "to improve delivery of the GED Tests to students overseas, but it has been tremendously challenging to administer the program securely."

Although the GED Testing Service disestablished its network of overseas testing centers in mid-1995, members of the GEDTS staff continue to answer hundreds of inquiries each year from foreign nationals seeking to take the tests, as well as from institutions requesting more information about how the tests can be used.

Cathy Allin, Client Services Coordinator at the GED Testing Service, has been responsible for tracking the calls and letters received at GEDTS from adults in foreign countries who want to take the GED Tests. She says of the experience, "It quickly became clear that there was a real demand that our current delivery system couldn't meet. We had to find a better way to serve overseas candidates."

Sylvan Learning Systems, Inc. is a publicly held corporation (NASDAQ listing: SLVN) and a leading provider of educational services. The company offers testing for academic admissions, as well as professional licensure and certification programs at more than 1,300 centers worldwide. In addition, Sylvan provides personalized instruction to students of all ages and skill levels through its network learning centers and through contractual agreements with schools and other organizations.

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- "Neighborhoods Online" is ISCV's project with LibertyNet to support neighborhood activism: http://libertynet.org/community/phila/natl.html

Manual from page 5

Sections 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6-1, Section 7, and Section 9.1-3.

The GED Testing Service will send updates to this manual periodically over the coming years until 2000 Series GED Tests are released. The next update packet, which will include a new Section 10 and corresponding Appendix G, will be shipped in 1998. Whenever you receive an update in the mail, review it promptly and be sure to insert it under the appropriate heading.

In addition, plans are under way to offer the manual in alternative formats. A survey of GED Testing Centers completed in September will be evaluated to determine the most useful and economical method for delivering the manual's policies, forms, procedures, and reference materials electronically.

The terms and conditions contained in this manual are a legally binding part of each GED Testing Center's Annual Contract. Therefore, it's essential that all program staff are thoroughly familiar with the policies and procedures that the manual contains. Each GED Administrator, GED Chief Examiner and GED Scoring Site Director receives one free copy of the manual; all future updates are also free.

Additional copies of the *GED Examiner's Manual* are available from the GED Fulfillment House (see page 12) for $15.00, plus shipping and handling.

If your center has not yet received a 1997 GED Examiner's Manual, or if the manual you received is damaged, please fax a description of the error to Lisa Richards Hone, GED Testing Service, (202) 775-8578, or e-mail lisa_richards@ace.nche.edu. Be sure to include your 10-digit center identification number, a daytime telephone number, and contact name.

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New GED Administrators Move In

Kay Charron is the new GED Administrator for Vermont. Her phone number is (802) 828-5133. Clive Smith takes over as GED Administrator for the District of Columbia; (202) 541-6314, and Richard LaPan joins the GED staff in New Mexico as Administrator; (505) 827-6524. Welcome also to new GED Administrators Coraly Betancourt Garcia in Puerto Rico; (787) 759-2000, ext. 4567 and Filemom Lauttetue in American Samoa; (684) 633-5772.

Front Page News Too Tough for Most High School Seniors, Study Says

A recent study finds that most teenagers have trouble reading the front page and editorial sections of many U.S. newspapers.

Touchstone Applied Science Associates, Inc. found that more than two-thirds of high school seniors could not fully comprehend those articles usually located at the front of the paper.

Using a Degrees of Reading Power test, the educational test publishing company analyzed the level of difficulty presented in the different sections of various U.S. newspapers. The easiest text fell between 25 and 30 on the scale, while the most difficult passages landed in the 80 to 85 range. Front-page stories averaged between 67 and 71.

Many fewer students had trouble understanding the sports pages, where the average difficulty level rated a 60.

LDA Conference Comes to Washington, DC

The Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) will host its international conference at the Washington Hilton and Towers, March 11–14, 1998. The theme of this year's meeting is "Ensuring the Right to: Learn, Dream, Work, Succeed."

Members and nonmembers alike are encouraged to pre-register to reserve their seats in the sessions of their choice. Early bird rates are still in effect! For information and registration materials, call LDA at (412) 341-1515.

"Legacy" Provides Focus of NCFL Meeting

The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) will hold its seventh annual conference, "Family Literacy: Building a Legacy," April 19–21, 1998, in Louisville, KY. For more information, contact Carmel Mackin at (502) 584-1133.

GEDTS Test Development Vacancies Posted

The GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education (ACE) has two opportunities available in its Test Development Unit.

Director, Test Development

Requirements: Master's degree in educational measurement or a related field required. At least seven years' experience directing a district, state, or national high-stakes test development program. Individual must have strong skills in project management, writing, speaking, presenting, financial management experience including developing and monitoring budgets. *Primary Responsibilities:* Directs and supervises the Test Development Unit in the development of the GED Tests. Oversees all psychometric aspects of test development; designs, implements, and supervises maximum quality control procedures and activities to ensure high quality, high impact tests. Represents GEDTS and the American Council on Education at national- and state-level meetings.

Mathematics Test Specialist

Requirements: Master's degree in mathematics or master's of education with bachelor's degree in mathematics, five years' experience teaching mathematics at the secondary or adult education level, and knowledge of current mathematics curriculum at the secondary level. Requires managerial experience and superior editing, writing, and speaking experience. Working knowledge of NCTM and state standards; and links to professional mathematics networks/organizations also required. *Responsibilities:* Coordinates and manages the development and production of all editions of the GED Mathematics Tests as well as ESL test and Interdisciplinary form. Ensures that tests accurately reflect national curricula in secondary mathematics and meet the broad GED test specifications. Responsible for content accuracy and quality of tests, analyzing production needs, and monitoring production of all final test copy.

For additional information, contact the Human Resources Department, American Council on Education, (202) 939-9423. ACE is an equal opportunity employer.

The reason that most people fail, instead of succeed, is that they trade what they want MOST for what they want at the MOMENT.

—author unknown

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Letters, continued from page 4

that I need more work in those areas.

My results were 51 in Social Studies, 53 in Science, and 54 in Literature. My question to you is: If I achieved these results on the actual GED exam would the test scores be high enough for me to enter college? I would also like to know if these results were poor or good?

I left school in the 9th grade, which was the worst decision I have ever made in my life....I'll be looking forward to your response! Thanks again! :-)

Joel H. (via e-mail)

We don't know where Joel H. lives, but it appears as if he may be college-bound sooner than he thinks. Thanks for your compliments, Joel. And best wishes for your success on the real GED Tests!

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